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THESIS

**REALIGNMENT OF UNITED STATES FORCES IN THE
PACIFIC: WHY THE U.S. SHOULD PURSUE FORCE
SUSTAINMENT TRAINING IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE
PHILIPPINES**

by

Stephen C. Cohn

June 2006

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Aurel Croissant
Raymond Roll

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U.S. SHOULD PURSUE FORCE SUSTAINMENT TRAINING IN THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Stephen C. Cohn
Major, United States Marine Corps
B.A. Psychology, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1990

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2006

Author: Stephen C. Cohn

Approved by: Aurel Croissant
Thesis Advisor

Raymond Roll
Second Reader

Douglas Porch
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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This thesis will argue that the United States should attempt to increase its access to training opportunities in the Republic of the Philippines. In 2003, the Pentagon outlined plans which called for the realignment and transformation of U.S. forces across the globe. The planned realignment of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia necessitates access to new training areas in Southeast Asia. This thesis will identify why the United States should focus its efforts in the Philippines by identifying: 1) why U.S.-Philippine political and military relations have warmed over the past 15 years, as well as what both countries hope to gain from this positive trend; 2) how the expansion of existing, and establishment of new training opportunities in the Philippines will enhance U.S. force capabilities while also fostering the development of the AFP into a more capable, professional armed force; and 3) ways to mitigate possible fears of an increased U.S. presence in the area by focusing on the benefits which will arise from it. Ultimately, U.S. access to training area in the Philippines will add stability both to the Philippines and Southeast Asia as a whole, while simultaneously aiding in the Global War on Terror.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	HISTORY OF U.S.-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS	2
B.	REINVIGORATED U.S.-PHILIPPINE RELATIONSHIP	3
C.	IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED U.S. ACCESS.....	5
D.	MAJOR QUESTIONS AND ARGUMENT	9
II.	EBBS AND FLOWS OF THE UNITED STATES-PHILIPPINE SECURITY ALLIANCE	11
A.	HISTORY OF U.S.-PHILIPPINE SECURITY TIES.....	11
B.	BREAKDOWN IN U.S.-PHILIPPINE COLD WAR ALLIANCE	15
C.	REPAIRING THE DAMAGED ALLIANCE.....	19
D.	HARDENING THE ALLIANCE	22
III.	IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING UNITED STATES MILITARY ACCESS TO PHILIPPINE TRAINING AREAS	27
A.	2001 QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW	27
B.	THE ABU SAYYAF THREAT	30
C.	OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-PHILIPPINES.....	32
D.	MUTUAL LOGISTICS SUPPORT AGREEMENT	36
E.	CONCLUSION	40
IV.	PERCEPTIONS OF THE INCREASED U.S. PRESENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES.....	41
A.	TESTING THE VFA: PHILIPPINE RAPE CASE.....	42
B.	OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM: PHILIPPINE HOSTAGE DEBACLE	44
C.	CHINA'S NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF U.S. STRATEGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.....	45
D.	ASEAN.....	48
E.	MITIGATING FEARS	49
F.	CONCLUSION	51
V.	CONCLUSION.....	53
A.	SUMMARY OF RESULTS	53
B.	RECOMMENDATIONS	55
APPENDIX I	MUSLIM SECESSIONIST GROUPS IN THE PHILIPPINES.....	61
A.	THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF).....	61
B.	RAJAH SOLAIMAN MOVEMENT (RSM)	66
APPENDIX II	67
A.	BAKER PISTON	67
B.	BALANCE PISTON.....	67
C.	BALIKATAN	67
D.	L-FCARAT	67
E.	COBRA GOLD	68

F.	FLASH PISTON	68
G.	FUSION PISTON.....	68
H.	HANDA	68
I.	MARSEAEX	68
J.	MARSURVEX	69
K.	MTWS	69
L.	PALAH	69
M.	PHIBLEX/MEUEX	69
N.	PIX.....	69
O.	RIMPAC	69
P.	SAGIP	70
Q.	SEACAT.....	70
R.	TALON VISION.....	70
S.	TEAK PISTON	70
T.	VECTOR BALANCE PISTON.....	71
LIST OF REFERENCES.....		73
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST		79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. U.S. Assistance to Philippines, 2002-2006	25
Figure 2. Map of the Republic of the Philippines.....	59
Figure 3. Map of the southern region of the Philippines, including Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago	60

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis will argue that the United States should attempt to increase its access to training opportunities in the Republic of the Philippines. In 2003, the Pentagon outlined plans which called for the realignment and transformation of U.S. forces across the globe. The planned realignment of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia necessitates access to new training areas in Southeast Asia. This thesis will identify why the United States should focus its efforts in the Philippines by identifying:

1. Why both political and military relations have warmed between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines over the past 15 years, as well as what the U.S. and the Philippines hope to gain from this positive trend.
2. How increased U.S. access to training opportunities in the Philippines will deepen military to military relations between the United States and the Philippines, while also increasing the capabilities and interoperability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Included will be a case study of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines.
3. Lastly, assuming there will be increased U.S. access to training opportunities in the Philippines, what negative reactions might be expected from within the Philippines as well as other nations in the region.

The expansion of existing, and establishment of new training opportunities in the Philippines will enhance U.S. force capabilities while also fostering the development of the AFP into a more capable, professional armed force. The continued professional development of the AFP will add stability both to the

Philippines and Southeast Asia as a whole, while simultaneously aiding in the Global War on Terror.¹

A. HISTORY OF U.S.-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS

In order to determine why increased U.S. access to Philippine training areas is beneficial to both the United States and the Philippines, a review of the events which have led up to the planned realignment of U.S. Forces in Northeast Asia is required. Following the failed ratification of the Bases Treaty in 1991, relations between the United States and the Philippines hit their lowest point since World War II, leading to the departure of U.S. forces from the Philippines to Japan and South Korea.² This event had not only marked the end of almost 100 years of continuous U.S. military presence in the Philippines, but also meant that the Philippine military was now solely responsible for the country's external and internal security.³ This new security challenge would soon point out to the Philippine government that, as the AFP was still in dire need of modernization, it was ill-equipped for this daunting task. This was due to internal Philippine dynamics as Philippine democratic institutions and practices had both delayed and precipitated drastic modification of the proposed AFP modernization program.⁴

By the mid 1990s rising regional threats coupled with numerous Philippine internal security concerns forced both the Philippines and the United States to reevaluate their troubled security relationship. By 1996 the Philippines had yet to modernize its military and was in search of ways to reintroduce U.S. security assistance its shores.⁵ The United States, recognizing that the People's

¹ White House. *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (2004), www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf. Accessed 12 March, 2006. pp.25-26.

² Rommel C. Banlaoi. "The Role of Philippine-American Relations in the Global Campaign against Terrorism: Implications for Regional Security," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, (August 2002): p.299.

³ Renato Cruz De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations: A Ghost from the Cold War or an Alliance for the 21st Century?" *Asian Survey*, Issue 6. (2003): p.971.

⁴ Renato Cruz De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era: The Ordeal of the Philippine Military's Modernization Program," *Armed Forces and Society*, (Fall 1999): pp.120-25.

⁵ Renato Cruz De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," pp. 977-78.

Republic of China appeared to be in the beginning of a naval arms build-up in the South China Sea felt the need to reassure other Asian nations of U.S. security commitment to the region.

B. REINVOGRATED U.S.-PHILIPPINE RELATIONSHIP

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's declaration of support to the U.S. anti-terrorism campaign in September, 2001 appears to have been the key to solving this dilemma as it unlocked the door through which U.S. military assistance and equipment could once again flow into the Philippines.⁶ Immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the two nations signed an interim arrangement that gave the United States access to storing military weapons and supplies in the Philippines, the right to permanent over-flight, and approval to build temporary camps for U.S. troops in support of the Global War on Terror. This agreement was key to U.S. efforts to upgrade American military links in Southeast Asia in order to prevent the region from becoming a new safe haven for international terrorists.

Michael Montesano in his article "The Philippines in 2002" argues that the renewed Philippine-American military ties seem to reflect long-term U.S. priorities. He stresses that three issues shaped Philippine affairs in 2002: President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's eligibility to contest the 2004 election, ever-greater government revenue shortfalls, and American determination to use the country as a venue for strategic posturing in Southeast Asia.⁷ His argument is supported by a meeting between President Arroyo and President Bush in 2003. In this meeting President Arroyo stressed the determination of the Philippine government to move forward on an ambitious program of military reform, including increased allocation of resources to Philippine national defense. In turn, President Bush committed to assist the Philippines in this effort. Additionally, the two Presidents agreed that their respective defense

⁶ Renato Cruz De Castro, "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," pp. 980-82.

⁷ Michael J. Montesano. "The Philippines in 2002," *Asian Survey*. Vol. 43, Issue 1. (Jan-Feb, 2003): pp.154-55.

establishments committed to embark on a multi-year plan to implement the key recommendations of the Joint Defense Assessment.⁸

In 2003, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld outlined the Pentagon's plans for the realignment and transformation of U.S. forces in East Asia. This change in force structure was deemed necessary in order to address the emerging new security threats of the region. This realignment will distribute U.S. military power across the region to provide a quick response to both current and emerging threats, specifically the terrorist threat. In 2004 the National Security Strategy (NSS) established homeland security as the first priority of the Nation, with the U.S. armed forces being tasked to provide an active, layered defense, both at home and abroad. Southeast Asia currently contains areas that serve as breeding grounds for threats to U.S. interests. These new security challenges will be addressed by the proposed realignment and transformation of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia, the objectives of which are threefold: creation of a global anti-terrorism environment; providing a forward posture and presence; lastly, promoting regional security.⁹ One result of the realignment of U.S. forces will be the requirement for access to new training areas for U.S. force sustainment. This thesis will discuss why the Philippines can fulfill the needs of U.S. force sustainment due to its strategic geography, favorable historical precedents, as well as a government that is amenable to an increased U.S. presence.

There are several sources which provide credence to this supposition. In "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations: A Ghost from the Cold War or an Alliance for the 21st Century?" De Castro contends that the Philippine-U.S. post-9/11 security relationship is characterized by temporary and limited American troop deployments aimed at developing the Armed Forces of the Philippines' counterterrorism capability and fostering interoperability between the Philippine and American armed forces. He concludes that the post-9/11 alliance is significantly different from the two countries' security relationship during the

⁸ Anonymous. "Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines." *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*. Vol.39, Issue. 43. Washington, (2003): p.1.

⁹ The National Military Strategy of the United States of America (2004), pp.19-20.

Cold War.¹⁰ Bryan Leifer also addresses one application of the revitalized U.S.-Philippine security relationship in his article “Terrorist organizations in Southeast Asia: Islamic Nationalism, a Unifying Theme.” In it, he addresses successes of the 2002 U.S.-Philippine bilateral actions against the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines.¹¹

C. IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED U.S. ACCESS

The resumption of regular U.S. deployments to the Philippines, coupled with the proposed realignment of U.S. Forces in Northeast Asia, has sparked various levels of criticism from not only within the Philippines but from China and ASEAN member states as well. In fact, some analysts claim that the revived U.S.-Philippine alliance is nothing more than a return to neo-colonialism on the part of the United States. Specifically, the renewed interest in Southeast Asia has everything to do with United States neo-conservative military and economic ambitions in East and Southeast Asia and nothing to do with either a real or perceived Islamic terrorist threat.¹² In fact they argue that the foray by the United States into the Southern Philippines against the Abu Sayyaf was just a target of convenience.

Jim Glassman, in his article “The ‘War on Terrorism’ Comes to Southeast Asia” argues that the clearly stated objective of United States neo-conservatives since before 9/11 is to restore military relations with key countries in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, while expanding regional defense alliances to include other countries (Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand).¹³ Glassman contends that this strategy is not as altruistic as it appears. This reinvigorated alliance has everything to do with United States neo-conservative military and economic ambitions in East and Southeast Asia, and little or nothing to do with real or imagined Islamic terrorist threats. He argues that United States

¹⁰ De Castro. “The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations,” pp.982-83.

¹¹ Bryan Leifer. “Terrorist organizations in Southeast Asia: Islamic Nationalism, A Unifying Theme.” The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, (2004): pp.4-5. <http://www.mafhoum.com/press7/206P4.htm>. Accessed 12 April 2006.

¹² Jim Glassman. “The ‘War on Terrorism’ Comes to Southeast Asia,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. Vol 35, Iss 1, (2005): p.1.

¹³ Ibid., p.3.

economic interests and concerns about encroachment by China, along with ways in which internal instability in countries like Indonesia, might destabilize the region and United States ambitions for it. Glassman contends that the Philippines in 2001, currently struggling against the ASG, provided the United States its first opportunity to test this new strategy.

Shortly after 9/11, U.S. government officials announced that the ASG- who had been conducting kidnap for ransom operations in the southern Philippines- had links to al-Qaeda and would become a focus of United States global anti-terrorism operations. According to Glassman, the United States went to great lengths to build up this al-Qaeda link so as to portray ASG as a threat which required a massive deployment of military force to the region. Against the backdrop of major political maneuvers in the late 1980s and 90s, including the People's Power Revolution and the successful negotiations with the powerful Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the appearance on the scene of ASG in the early 1990s was barely noticed by the international arena. In a world where many different criminal and small-scale terrorist organizations operate on the fringe of insurgent groups, in this case on the fringe of the much larger MNLF and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the ASG was seen as little more than a group of bandits. In fact, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo made a public statement portraying the ASG as "a money-crazed gang of criminals" prior to 9/11.¹⁴ Members of the Philippine Left also downplayed the ASG's importance by purporting that the ASG was created by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in collusion with Philippine intelligence, formed to further fractionalize and undermine the Moro insurgency.¹⁵

Glassman continues his criticism by stating that the extension of the Global War on Terrorism to the Southern Philippines has been out of proportion to the actual threat of the insurgent forces in the region- and that the increase of

¹⁴ Peace Mission Report. <http://www.yonip.com/main/articles/Basilan%20Report.html>. Accessed 12 April 2006.

¹⁵ Statement of International Solidarity Mission website. http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/philippines/philippines_article.pdf. Accessed 12 April 2006.

U.S. deployments has brought with it a 4000% increase in military expenditures¹⁶ that encourage corruption at the highest levels of the Philippine government.¹⁷ The most dramatic evidence of this came with the 2004 indictment of Major General Carlos Garcia, head comptroller of the AFP, for acquiring the equivalent of \$2.5 million (pesos) over and above his legal income from 1993-2003.¹⁸ Glassman also argues that the response to the supposed ASG threat has included joint military operations that have no clear purpose in relation to the terrorist threat and which conform instead to the imperatives of the pre-9/11 U.S. agenda for the Philippines.

With a scheme reminiscent of a chapter from Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Glassman purports that the expanded U.S. military operations in the Philippines against an imagined Islamic terror threat after 9/11 has simply provided a convenient scenario for the expansion of operations already stated as a policy objective across a wide array of Washington elites. The fact that the U.S. military has publicly stated its desire for renewed access to the Philippines and to gain such access on the basis of the events of 9/11 is in part a function of the U.S. government's continued influence in Manila.¹⁹ Glassman argues that Washington's strong influence is due to colonial and neo-colonial legacies, as well as the ongoing dependence of the Philippine elite and the marginal economy they control.²⁰ 9/11 provided Philippine elites, who have battled against widespread nationalist sentiment, the opportunity to sell their own collusion with the U.S. government as necessary in order to protect the national interest. Glassman feels that this was completely in line with the goal of U.S. elites, as 9/11 provided the pretext for re-introduction of a neo-colonial presence.

¹⁶ Glassman, p.3.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁸ Temario C. Rivera. "The Philippines in 2004." *Asian Survey*, Vol. XLV, No.1, (Jan/Feb 2005): p.130.

¹⁹ Glassman, p.10.

²⁰ The Philippine economy is highly dependent on foreign direct investment from the West, access to U.S. markets, and remittances from abroad. In 2004, nearly 10 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) remitted \$8.5 billion (compared to \$506 million in FDI), equal to 10% of GDP and more than half the government budget.

Therefore, due to the U.S. government's continuing power and influence vis-à-vis its former colony, the United States can impose an increase in U.S. deployments to the Philippines in spite of substantial antagonism within the Philippines. Of all arguments presented by Glassman, he believes this in particular makes the reinvigorated U.S.-Philippine alliance neo-colonial.

Some criticize the increased presence of U.S. forces in the Philippines because of the alleged misconduct of some U.S. troops while in the country. At the forefront of this debate was the December, 2005 indictment of four U.S. Marines for allegedly raping a Philippine woman following a bilateral exercise. This case revives memories of past abuses by U.S. forces stationed in Subic Bay who were shielded from local prosecution. It also comes amid the proposed realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, where protests have often erupted, most notoriously over the 1995 rape of a minor by three U.S. servicemen.

Still others criticize what role the Philippines is expected to play in the international agenda as they are now entangled in a reinvigorated alliance with the United States. Despite general agreement on the importance of U.S.-Philippine relations and the U.S.-led war on terrorism, bilateral frictions have occurred as the Philippines has become more assertive regarding its self-interest and sovereignty. In July 2004, President Arroyo withdrew Philippine forces from Iraq in response to the demands of Islamic militants who had kidnapped a Filipino contract worker, despite some criticism in the United States that the Philippines was "caving-in to terrorists."²¹

The proposed realignment of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia has also brought about negative perceptions of U.S. global strategy from other nations in the region. In particular, the Chinese government feels there is overwhelming evidence that the United States is focused on containing China.²² They feel that in pursuit of the strategy of containment, the United States is seeking both the

²¹ Thomas Lum. "The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service, (January 10, 2006): p.1.

²² Robert G. Sutter. Chinese Policy Priorities and Their Implications for the United States, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000): p.206.

creation of new, and the shoring up of old, alliances in the region.²³ They also believe that the United States is bolstering Taiwan's defenses against China's growing military, creating a disparity in capabilities.²⁴ The Japan-U.S. relationship is also troubling to the Chinese government as it views this as an opportunity for Japan to continue its militaristic trend. Lastly, the tensions between the U.S. and China have also confronted the ten members of ASEAN with one of their biggest challenges since the end of the Cold War: the grouping could potentially face a damaging split if forced to choose between Beijing and Washington.²⁵

D. MAJOR QUESTIONS AND ARGUMENT

Four questions are at the core of this thesis: First, what events have led to a warming in political and military relations between the United States and the Philippines in the last 15 years? Second, in the quest for new training opportunities in Southeast Asia, why should the U.S. focus on the Republic of the Philippines? Third, what are the consequences of an increased U.S. presence in the Philippines? Specifically, what responses can be expected from within the Philippines as well as regional neighbors, including China and the fellow member states of ASEAN?

It is my argument that the United States should focus its training efforts in the Philippines for several reasons: first, the United States and the Philippines have a long history of security cooperation. Second, recent warming trends in foreign relations have made an increased U.S. presence in the Philippines more palatable to the Filipinos. Third, due to budget constraints the Philippine government has been unable to modernize its armed forces- which it must do in order to better cope with both internal and external threats to Philippines security. Forth, the Philippines' geographic location is a key part of U.S. global strategy.

²³ Yong Deng. "Chinese Perceptions of U.S. Power and Strategy," *Asian Affairs, an American Review*. Vol.28, Iss. 3 (Fall 2001). p.1.

²⁴ ADM William J. Fallon. US PACOM Commander testimony before House Armed Services Committee, 8 March 2005. <http://www.shaps.hawaii.edu/security/us/2005/20050308_fallon.html>. Accessed 12 March 2006.

²⁵ Oxford Research. ASEAN: US-China tensions affect South-east Asia. (June 28, 2001).

Lastly, due to its large rural land mass, the Philippines has a plethora of quality ranges that could be used for required U.S. force sustainment in the region.

There are four main chapters to this paper. Chapter II will outline the historical U.S.-Philippines security relationship as well as identifying the cause of the recent warming trend in foreign relations between the two nations, post base closure. Chapter III will examine why the proposed U.S. force realignment in the Pacific requires the pursuit of new training areas in Southeast Asia. This chapter will also examine why increased U.S. access to training opportunities in the Philippines will deepen military-military relations between the U.S. and Philippines, while also increasing the capabilities and interoperability of the AFP. Included will be a case study of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines. Chapter IV will identify those fears generated by an increased U.S. presence in the area (internal to the Philippines, China, and ASEAN). It will also examine ways to mitigate these fears by outlining the positive associations and reactions that can result from an increased presence. The final chapter will provide recommendations for whether or not a shift in current U.S. policy is required. The end state of this study is to identify a possible road map which will may lead to increased access to training opportunities in Southeast Asia, and specifically the Philippines.

II. EBBS AND FLOWS OF THE UNITED STATES-PHILIPPINE SECURITY ALLIANCE

The goal of this chapter is to identify the ebbs and flows of the United States and the Republic of the Philippines security alliance over the past 15 years, as well as what each country hopes to gain from recent warming trends. Relations between the United States and the Philippines began a steady decline following the 1991 decision of the Philippine Senate to deny the renewal of the 1947 Military Bases agreement. However, over the next few years numerous independent events would lead to a warming of relations between the two countries. Examples include the failure of Philippine military modernization programs as well as the 1995 discovery of an apparent Chinese encroachment on the Spratly Islands, which the Philippines claimed as sovereign soil. The interaction of these two events precipitated a gradual warming trend in foreign relations between the two nations, ultimately leading to a dramatic increase in United States economic and military assistance to the Philippines.

A. HISTORY OF U.S.-PHILIPPINE SECURITY TIES

United States and Philippine relations go back as far as 1898 when U.S. and Filipino troops collaborated against Spain during the Spanish-American War. Upon conclusion of hostilities, the Treaty of Paris granted the United States colonial authority over the Philippine archipelago.²⁶ Domestic opposition made the United States a reluctant colonial power as many Americans viewed imperialism as contrary to national values. Despite this, the United States felt compelled to accept the Philippines as a colony for two reasons: first, the United States did not want to hand the archipelago back over to the Spanish; and second, that the United States was also reluctant to leave the door open for the Japanese. Ultimately, the United States considered the Philippines to be strategically important to its interests in the Asia-Pacific region as it had a great potential in servicing the United States' growing commercial and naval needs.²⁷

²⁶ Garel Grunder and William Livezey. *The Philippines and the United States*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951): p.36.

²⁷ Ibid., p.37.

From the outset the United States stated that its policy was to slowly groom the Philippines for eventual self-rule. The United States set up a colonial government that instituted provincial governors and a national legislature²⁸. With the passing of the Tydings-McDuffie Law, the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines was established on 15 November, 1935, with Manuel L. Quezon as the first president. The Commonwealth provided the Philippines a ten-year transition period before the assumption of full independence post-World War II in 1945²⁹. One of the government's first proclamations was the Commonwealth Act No.1, otherwise known as the National Defense Act of the Philippines. This Act mandated the creation of a defense system supported by a citizen army of 10,000 active and 400,000 reserve personnel.³⁰ It also intended to establish both a Philippine Navy (PN) and an Air Force (PAF), but the onset of World War II and the subsequent establishment of a Japanese puppet government prevented this from occurring.³¹

Eventually, the Japanese were overcome and the Philippines were liberated by the combined efforts of the Philippine resistance and the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East led by General Douglas MacArthur. On July 4, 1946, the United States formally declared the independence of the Philippines.³² On that same day the Republic of the Philippines and the United States signed two agreements that would provide the basis for all future Philippine-American relations: the 1946 Philippine-American Treaty on General Relations and the 1946 Philippine American Trade Act. Within eight months two more agreements were signed: on 14 March 1947 the Philippine-American Military Bases Agreement (MBA) and on 21 March 1947 the Philippine-American Assistance Pact. These agreements strengthened American economic and security

²⁸ D.R. SarDesai. *Southeast Asia, Past and Present*. Fifth edition. (California: Westview Press, 2003): p.161.

²⁹ Grunder, p.237

³⁰. Rommel C. Banlaoi. "The Role of Philippine-American Relations in the Global Campaign against Terrorism: Implications for Regional Security", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol 24, Num.2, (August 2002): p.297.

³¹ Ibid., p.298.

³² Grunder, p.253.

interests in the Asia-Pacific region by allowing the establishment of Subic Bay Naval Base in Olongapo and Clark Air Base in Pampanga as well as 21 other bases³³. These bases would soon become instrumental to American Cold War strategy, especially during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

In 1951 the United States and the Republic of the Philippines signed the Mutual Defense Treaty, where each country agreed to the concept of collective defense of their two nations. This treaty recognized that “an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the parties would be dangerous to [both of their] peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance [within their] constitutional processes.”³⁴ The United States, with its great security umbrella, agreed to protect the Philippines from any major strategic threat in the region. With its external security assured, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was then able to focus solely on the internal security functions of counterinsurgency and civic actions. To assist the AFP, the United States provided military assistance in the form of both loans and grants which accounted for an estimated 90% of the AFP’s annual budget for operations and maintenance³⁵.

From 1946 to present day, the Philippine military has had to face numerous internal security problems, mostly due to insurgencies. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) led an armed insurgency from the 1940s through the 1950s. This group morphed into a reformed communist party in the late 1960s and its military wing, the New Peoples Army (NPA), has continually challenged the Philippine Government.³⁶ In 1970 a Muslim secessionist movement developed in the Southern Philippines that would grow in size until it dominated the Philippine security agenda, continuing through the

³³ Banlaoi, p.298.

³⁴ See Article IV of the Mutual Defense Treaty. <http://www.dfa.gov.ph/vfa/frame/frmmdt.htm>. Accessed 12 April 2006.

³⁵ De Castro. “Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era,” p.122.

³⁶ Eva-Lotta Hedmann and John Sidel. *Philippine Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century: Colonial Legacies, post-colonial trajectories*. (London: Routledge, 2000): pp.1-24.

present day.³⁷ In 1972 President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in order to stabilize perceived domestic security issues, forcing the AFP to pull resources away from counterinsurgency to the development of tactics, techniques and procedures to enforce martial rule.³⁸ Marital law officially ended in 1986 when President Marcos was overthrown by the People's Power Revolution. With the end of marital law, the AFP was able to once again focus on its insurgent threats. Perceiving its major threat to be internal and that its external security was secure under the protections provided by the vast U.S. security umbrella, the new Philippine government directed all of its military resources solely towards domestic issues.³⁹

However, shortly after coming to power, Marcos' successor, President Corazon Aquino, found the readiness of the AFP inferior to its ASEAN counterparts and that it was also ill-equipped to contain even its own domestic security threats.⁴⁰ As the AFP had been focusing only on internal threats for over four decades, the Philippine Army was only equipped to support its primary mission of counterinsurgency: major items (mostly of U.S. origin) included 41 light tanks, 85 armored infantry fighting vehicles, 285 armored personnel carriers, and assorted light and medium towed artillery. The Philippine Navy was made up all former U.S. ships, most of World War II vintage. In late 1989, the navy maintained only three frigates and eleven corvettes, none with missiles. As the Philippine Navy's mission was to protect and police the nation's 7,100 islands (with a combined coastline of 36,289 kilometers), the fleet consisted of mainly patrol boats, including twelve coastal and thirty-nine inshore patrol craft. The PAF air force inventory in 1990 included only two squadrons of F-5 Freedom Fighters (fifteen combat aircraft). Counterinsurgency operations were supported

³⁷ Rizal G. Buendia. "The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Ethno-religious War or Economic Conflict?" in *The Politics of Death*. Aurel Croissant, Sascha Kneip, and Beate Martin, eds. (forthcoming): pp. 1-7.

³⁸ Mark Thompson. *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995): pp. 54-55.

³⁹ Ibid. p.158.

⁴⁰ De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," p.121.

by a squadron of eight T-28D Trojan propeller-driven trainer/attack airplanes, as well as fifty-five Bell UH-1H/Iroquois transport helicopters and sixteen AUH-76 attack helicopters⁴¹.

Despite the huge gaps in military capability as compared to its ASEAN partners, the Aquino administration was reluctant to invest in the AFP due to two reasons: Aquino had both risen to power because of a military mutiny while also suffering six separate coup attempts by right-wing military rebels. Additionally, public distrust of the military over its involvement during the martial law era coupled with a poor economy also made any attempts at AFP modernization unlikely.⁴² Therefore, although the Philippine government was aware of the need for some sort of modernization plan to address the dismal state of the PN and PAF, it remained unwilling to invest in modernization of the AFP as it could still rely on funding from the United States to keep its antiquated equipment functioning.

B. BREAKDOWN IN U.S.-PHILIPPINE COLD WAR ALLIANCE

With the conclusion of the 1988 base review, followed closely with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States began to reassess its overall security strategy in the Pacific.⁴³ The post-Soviet era now had new, smaller threats that required less U.S. military power: risks to oil supplies, maritime interdiction, regional hegemons, and territorial disputes. This assessment translated into the planned reduction of forward-deployed forces and a reduced need for overseas bases. The new strategy called for setting up smaller bases, establishing more bilateral and multilateral defense treaties, conducting joint or bilateral training exercises, as well as occasional naval deployments in the region

⁴¹ Library of Congress Country Studies website. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/phtoc.html>. Accessed 4 Apr 2006.

⁴² De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," pp.121-125.

⁴³ George Schultz, and Raul Manglapus. "U.S.-Philippines Military Bases Agreement Review," 1988. *Department of State Bulletin*. (Dec 1988): p.24.

to project a forward-presence⁴⁴. Thus, American strategic planners were now seriously considering options which did not require U.S. reliance on its Philippine bases.

In Manila, the Aquino government was adopting a point of view that Philippine-U.S. security relations were nothing more than a commercial transaction which required compensation from the United States, as the Philippines was hosting the bases.⁴⁵ Philippine defense planners saw no credible external threat to the country for the next five years and therefore saw little value in the U.S. security umbrella. The Philippine government's official position on the U.S. bases was: "... the Philippines faced no external enemies or threats, and that threats arising from both communist insurgency and the right-wing military rebels could not be addressed by U.S. military presence in the country."⁴⁶ To many of those in the Aquino administration as well as the majority of the Philippine citizens, the most important value of the U.S. bases was their economic impact on the community.⁴⁷

In 1990 the Philippine and U.S. governments entered into a series of negotiations aimed at discussing the future of the Philippine bases, the nature of U.S.-Philippine relations, and ultimately a new bases treaty. A new accord was drafted after almost a year of talks called the "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Security," or "Pact of 1991".⁴⁸ The Pact was similar to the treaties signed in 1947 with the exception of a slow phasing out of the U.S. presence in the country over a ten year period, with the possibility of an extension. When it went to the Philippine Senate for ratification on September 16, 1991, it was voted down by a vote of 12 to 11. The majority of senators were upset for two reasons: the relatively low base-related compensation of \$203 million (all amounts in USD) for

⁴⁴ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.973.

⁴⁵ Robert Reid and Eileen Guerrero. *Corazon Aquino and the Brushfire Revolution*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995): p. 201.

⁴⁶ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.974.

⁴⁷ Renato Cruz De Castro. "Philippine Defense Policy in the 21st Century: Autonomous Defense or Back to the Alliance?" *Pacific Affairs*. Vol 78. (Fall 2005): p.408.

⁴⁸ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," Multiple references, p. 975.

the American use of Subic Naval Base, as well as the ten year plan instead of a 7 year withdrawal with no possibility of extension. With no extension offered, the Americans now had to vacate the Philippines. The Aquino government offered a three year phased-out withdrawal, but the United States opted to pull out within one year's time. When the last U.S. Marine departed Subic Bay in 1992, it marked the end of almost 100 years of continuous U.S. military presence in the Philippines.

The only legal framework remaining to guide the Philippine-American post-base closure security relationship was the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951. To ease the obviously strained relations, both countries opted to keep the treaty in force with no amendments, as well as maintaining the quarterly Mutual Defense Board for consultation on mutual security concerns. Additionally, the annual exercise "Balikatan", translated as "Shoulder to Shoulder," was allowed to continue.⁴⁹ In November of 1992 the U.S. significantly downgraded its political and military relations with the Philippines when it declared that it could no longer guarantee the external defense of the Philippines since it had lost facilities from which to operate. U.S. security relations with the Philippines would now fall only under the general heading of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)⁵⁰. This declaration was important for two reasons: first, the Philippines was now solely responsible for its own external security, and perhaps more significant, the United States withdrew most of its military assistance to the AFP.⁵¹

The loss of 90% of its operations and maintenance budget due to the U.S. pullout in 1992 (roughly \$200 million annually) virtually guaranteed that the AFP's mostly Vietnam Era military equipment would degrade even further unless the

⁴⁹ Kane Walsh. "Balikatan 2000: Renewing U.S.-Philippines Military Engagement." *Asia-Pacific Defense Forum*, (Summer 2000): pp. 6-22.

⁵⁰ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings. "Implications of the U.S. Withdrawal from Clark and Subic Bases." 102nd Congress. Second Session. 1992. p.35.

⁵¹ De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," p.122.

Philippine government undertook a drastic modernization effort.⁵² Faced with no alternative, in 1991 the Philippine government ordered the AFP to prepare a ten-year modernization program aimed at shifting defense priorities from internal to external threats, with the priority being given to the Philippine Navy. The Philippine Navy was solely responsible for naval deterrence and enforcing sea control not only inside Philippine territorial waters, but out to the 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as well.⁵³ The Philippine government's emphasis on naval development was necessary since it was aimed at preventing illegal fishing, poaching, and smuggling, which the government felt cost \$1 billion in lost revenues annually⁵⁴. It also had another unstated goal- to protect the Philippine claim to a portion of the Spratly Islands, to which the United States disagreed with⁵⁵. Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic gridlock, all attempts at the modernization of the military and the strengthening of the country's defense posture were stymied as the Philippine government stated any law pertaining to such would be dependent on the revitalization of the country's economy and the attainment of national competitiveness. Additionally, in the event the economic goals were achieved, the funds for modernization would only be released by the Senate if the AFP met the following objectives: a) if it became the lead disaster agency for the country, and b) if it took a more active part in environmental protection.⁵⁶

In addition to the failed Senate attempts to fund AFP modernization, Philippine-U.S. diplomatic relations were also in gridlock over the next few years due to inability from both sides to negotiate on a variety of issues ranging from bilateral relations to acquisitions and cross-servicing agreements. Explanations for the impasses were due to domestic Philippine fears of a possible U.S. return

⁵² De Castro. "Philippine Defense Policy in the 21st Century," p.408.

⁵³ De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post U.S-Bases Era," p.123.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p.123.

⁵⁵ Kenneth Conboy. "Conflict Potential in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea." Heritage Lecture #365. 1992.
<http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/HL365.cfm?renderforprint=1>. Accessed 15 Jan 2006.

⁵⁶ De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," p.127.

while the United States had uncertainty with dealing a government that had questionable U.S. foreign policy motives.⁵⁷ When President Ramos declined to enter into a Status of Forces Agreement with the United States in 1996, both countries opted to suspend all large-scale exercises, including Balikatan, pending ratification of some agreement on the legal status of visiting U.S. forces.⁵⁸ As a result, U.S.-Philippine relations had now entered their lowest point since the base closures- with little to no attempts at interaction from either country to remedy the situation.

C. REPAIRING THE DAMAGED ALLIANCE

A very interesting and unexpected event would soon reverse the negative views concerning both the proposed AFP modernization as well as security relations with the United States. In January 1995, a Filipino fishing vessel discovered the presence of Chinese naval units off of Mischief Reef, which was 160 miles from the Philippines' westernmost province of Palawan.⁵⁹ Defense officials soon verified that the People's Republic of China was discovered to have built "shelters" for fishermen on a portion of the Spratly Islands. The Philippine government claimed that the Chinese "shelters" were in fact naval support installations.⁶⁰ This discovery led credence to the AFP's forgotten claims as to the importance of an external defense capability. As a result of the onslaught of public hysteria over the Spratly Islands situation, the Senate unanimously approved "An Act Providing for the Modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and for other Purposes" also known as the "Republic Act 7898," on 23 February, 1995.⁶¹ Finally, after three long years and many failed attempts, the AFP now had approval to fund its modernization.

⁵⁷ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.976.

⁵⁸ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.977.

⁵⁹ Ian Storey. "Manila looks to USA for help over Spratlys." *Jane's Intelligence Review*. Vol. 011, Iss. 008, (Aug 1, 1999): p.1.

⁶⁰ Global Security website. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/spratly.htm>. Accessed 16 Jan 2006.

⁶¹ Government of the Philippines website. http://www.gppb.gov.ph/laws_rules/laws_ra.htm. Accessed 30 Jan 2006.

The Republic Act 7898 provided for a 15-year modernization program which provided for the creation of a sufficient naval capability to secure the nation's borders from all kinds of maritime intrusions (such as piracy, poaching, smuggling, and drug trafficking), while also developing a capability for inshore and offshore patrol, surface warfare, detection and maritime surveillance⁶². However, the Congress still had the ability to determine the program's objectives and funding needs, creating important leverage over the program. After a delay of almost a full year, the Philippine Congress set the modernization in motion when it allocated \$412 million for 1997, well below the AFP's original request of \$847 million. Although the Asian Financial crisis in 1997 would set the program back a few months over Philippine economic uncertainty, increased tensions with the Chinese over the Spratly Islands prompted the Senate to release modernization funds to the AFP⁶³.

The discovery of Chinese construction on Mischief Reef had also rudely awakened the Philippine government to recognize the country's need for some sort of external security capability, as Philippine defense officials and security experts now considered Chinese expansion in the South China Sea as their main long term security threat.⁶⁴ The Philippine government also came to the realization that it needed to readdress its policies regarding security relations with Washington, as a revitalized Philippine-U.S. security relationship was seen as key to soliciting additional U.S. support and funding for upgrading the AFP's equipment.⁶⁵

The United States also viewed these events as cause for concern, as they indicated that the Peoples Republic of China appeared to be in the midst of a naval build up in order to secure its claim to the entire South China Sea.⁶⁶

⁶² De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," p.129.

⁶³ De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," p.132.

⁶⁴ Ian Storey. "Manila Looks to USA for help over Spratlys." *Jane's Intelligence Review*. Vol 011, (Aug 1, 1999): p.1.

⁶⁵ De Castro. "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," p.130.

⁶⁶ Cameron Barr. "Asia's dangerous flash points: As Disputes among Pacific Neighbors threaten to Spread, US's Albright and Cohen visit to help cool off the region." *Christian Science Monitor* (Jul 27, 1999). p.1.

China's military modernization and territorial disputes with other nations in the South China Sea also appeared to be threatening the balance of power in the region. The United States felt that if it did not act this would undermine its position with the other ASEAN member nations, not to mention Japan and South Korea, since inaction would be interpreted as a weakening of the U.S. security commitment to them in favor of China.⁶⁷ Thus, officials in both Manila and Washington agreed that a revival of a strategic U.S.-Philippine relationship was necessary.

In short order the Philippine Senate ratified the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in 1999. Armed with this document, the United States and the Philippines now had the legal framework necessary for increased interaction between their militaries. The VFA was important for several reasons: first, it facilitated the resumption of large scale military exercises between the two countries- exercises that would lead to more familiarity, cooperation, and interoperability between the U.S. and Philippine militaries as well as generally improving the overall bilateral security relationship.⁶⁸ This would soon come to fruition as the annual bilateral U.S.-Philippine Balikatan exercise was resumed in February of 2000. Second, it provided the political framework for the development and implementation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) modernization program under the tutelage of a robust U.S. military. Last, and perhaps most important to the United States, the VFA also made it possible for the United States to pursue access to air and naval infrastructure in Luzon in case of a crisis in the region.

With the legal basis for U.S. troops deployed to the Philippines assured, the United States resumed its Foreign Military Assistance Program as well as the Excess Defense Articles Program with the Philippine government.⁶⁹ These programs were welcomed by the Philippines as much of the AFP military equipment was no longer functional. The cessation of U.S. Military aid in the

⁶⁷ M. Lyall Breckon and Thomas Hirshfeld. *The Dynamics of Security in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Center for Naval Analyses, (Jan 1996): p.26.

⁶⁸ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.979.

⁶⁹ U.S. Department of State website, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/fmtrpt/2005/45673.htm>. Accessed April 06.

1990s following the base closures had led to a rapid deterioration of AFP military equipment as much of it was dependent on U.S. made spare parts, logistical support and technical expertise. By 2001, of 102 M113 armored personnel carriers belonging to the AFP, only 64 were mission capable. Regarding aircraft, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) had only 18 mission capable helicopters, 5 F-5 A fighters, and one C-130 transport. The Philippine Navy (PN) had perhaps the worst readiness, as it was now only capable of putting 18 WWII era vessels to sea to patrol the country's vast maritime domain. Additionally, as the Philippine arsenal was only capable of producing limited amounts of small caliber ammunition, the AFP had been forced to import artillery shells and the balance of its small arms requirements from Thailand during military operations against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2000.⁷⁰

D. HARDENING THE ALLIANCE

The World Changed on September 11, 2001. We learned that a threat that gathers on the other side of the earth can strike our cities and kill our own citizens. It's an important lesson; one we can never forget. Oceans no longer protect America from the dangers of the world. We're protected by daily vigilance at home. And we will be protected by resolute and decisive action against threats abroad.

President George W. Bush; Sept 17, 2002⁷¹

In response to the devastating terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States government called for the creation of a global coalition against international terrorism, to be known as “The Coalition of the Willing.” The United States immediately began to develop plans which would take the fight to this new irregular enemy. Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was quick to respond when she offered up the use of the Philippines to the coalition in its pursuit of international terrorists. Her declaration was important as she not only offered Washington access to former U.S. bases in Subic Bay and Clark in support of the Global War on Terror, but also that she agreed to intelligence

⁷⁰ Renato Cruz De Castro. “The Dilemma Between Democratic Control versus Military Reforms: The Case of the AFP Modernisation Program, 1991-2004,” *Journal of Security Sector Management, Asian Special Issue*, (March 2005): p.6.

⁷¹ DOD. Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support, (2005): p.1.

sharing with the United States.⁷² Arroyo's intent of diplomatic and political support to the United States was intended to reinvigorate the U.S.-Philippine alliance. A longstanding ally via the Mutual Defense Treaty, the United States government had provided vast amounts of economic and military support to the Philippines over the past half-century. Arroyo was motivated to seek increased U.S. financial assistance to the Philippines, as the Philippines was still recovering from the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis as well as a resurgence of a Muslim Separatist threat in Mindanao.⁷³

During the post-World War II period, the Philippines was considered the second most developed country in East Asia, after Japan. However, over the last three decades, the Philippines had not experienced the same levels of economic development as its neighbors in Southeast Asia.⁷⁴ Analysts state that the Philippine economy has been stifled due to many systemic problems, including: political corruption, bureaucratic incompetence and red tape, an entrenched economic oligarchy, crony capitalism, government deficit and foreign debt, a highly inequitable distribution of wealth, the constant emigration of its professionals, poor infrastructure, a high birth rate and violent crime.⁷⁵ Located in the nation's south, Mindanao, one of the poorest and most crisis-ridden regions in the Philippines, has also been home to separatist conflict for years. Out of all provinces in the Philippines, Mindanao has approximately 65% of its population below the poverty line, the lowest access to safe drinking water, the least access to electricity, toilet and health facilities of any other region.⁷⁶

The United States was eager to offer assistance to the Philippines as it was alarmed by suspected links between the Abu Sayyaf Group, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, and Al Qaeda as well as other Islamic Militants in

⁷² Renato Cruz De Castro. "Addressing International Terrorism in Southeast Asia: A Matter of Strategic or Functional Approach?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, (Aug. 2004): p.1.

⁷³ Banlaoi, p.303.

⁷⁴ In 2004, the Philippines ranked 100 out of 140 countries in Foreign Direct Investment. USAID website. http://www.state.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/philippines/. Accessed 10 Apr 2006.

⁷⁵ Lum, p.5.

⁷⁶ Buendia, p.14.

the Southern Philippines who appeared to be consolidating power in Mindanao. By November the two nations conducted a summit in Washington, where Bush and Arroyo reaffirmed their commitments to, and the continued validity of, the Mutual Defense Agreement of 1951. Bush, in response to the offer of unequivocal Philippine support, offered the possibility of U.S. military involvement in the AFP campaign against the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines⁷⁷. President Arroyo declined the offer of manpower, and instead asked for new equipment and training for the AFP so that they would be better prepared to put down the rebel campaign. The two leaders approved a cohesive training plan for the AFP, delivery of new equipment to enhance AFP mobility, as well as the creation of a new bilateral consultative mechanism.⁷⁸

By introducing both U.S. economic and military assistance to the Philippines in its fight against the Abu Sayyaf Group, both the Philippines and the United States came away with their agendas satisfied. The Philippines once again had access to large amounts of economic and military assistance, as well as warm relations with a very powerful ally. With the Philippines now designated a “front-line state” in the Global War on Terror, the United States significantly increased its foreign assistance to the country (see figure 1).⁷⁹ This assistance was offered up in recognition of the Philippine Government’s acceptance of the Bush administration’s wish to test its new strategy of security cooperation activities within the Philippines sovereign territory. These new U.S. strategies were based on encouraging partner nations to develop, modernize and transform their own military capabilities.

Given that both the United States and the Philippines were satisfied with a re-kindled alliance, the United States could now safely consider plans which would allow increased U.S. military access to valuable Philippine training areas. The next chapter will focus on how this increased access to Philippine

⁷⁷ De Castro. “The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations,” p.980.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.981.

⁷⁹ Lum, p.17.

training areas would facilitate improvements in both the United States and Philippine militaries while simultaneously providing a stabilizing effect to crisis-ridden Mindanao.

Figure 1. U.S. Assistance to Philippines, 2002-2006.⁸⁰
(Millions of USD)

Account	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006
Child Survival and Health	9.4	25.6	22.9	28.8	26.8	21.4
Development Assistance	30.3	24.5	28.2	21.5	27.6	21.5
Economic Support Funds	3.9	33.0	45.0	17.6	34.7	25.0
Foreign Military Financing	1.9	44.0	49.8	19.8	29.7	30.0
International Military Education and Training	1.4	2.0	2.4	2.7	3.0	2.9
International Narcotics Control/Law Enforcement	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	3.9	2.0
Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism and De-mining	0.0	0.9	2.1	0.7	0.6	5.2
Peace Corps	1.8	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9
Peacekeeping	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0
Totals	48.7	132.4	153.0	110.8	129.1	110.9

Sources: U.S. Department of State; Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2006 (P.L. 109-102).

⁸⁰ Lum, p.18.

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III. IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING UNITED STATES MILITARY ACCESS TO PHILIPPINE TRAINING AREAS

Following a review of its force posture in 2001, the United States published a Quadrennial Defense Review which proposed the transformation of U.S. military forces around the globe. This proposed transformation requires the United States to both seek out new and reinforce existing access and infrastructure agreements. As the last chapter detailed, the reinvigorated U.S.-Philippine security relationship opened the door for the United States to once again pursue a portion of its annual military training requirements within the Republic of the Philippines. This chapter will identify how this increased access to Philippine training areas by U.S. forces has enhanced military to military relations between the United States and the Philippines, while simultaneously increasing the capabilities and interoperability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This increase in capabilities was a direct result of a steadily increasing U.S. military presence in numerous annual Philippine exercises and operations since 2001. Providing perhaps the best example of this was Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines in 2002. Building on this success, the United States and the Philippines signed the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement in 2003, which facilitated an increased frequency of U.S. force deployments to the Philippines. These deployments would not only continue to develop the professionalism of the AFP, but also provide a stabilizing effect to the region so as to encourage further economic and humanitarian assistance to crisis areas in the Philippines.

A. 2001 QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW

Within days of the Philippines pledge of support to the coalition, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld signed the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report which included the Pentagon's plans for the transformation of U.S. forces around the world. The proposed transformation of U.S. forces was designed to accomplish several key objectives of the United States National Military Strategy: the creation of a global anti-terrorism environment; providing a

forward posture and presence; lastly, promoting regional security.⁸¹ The proposed change in force structure was also deemed necessary in order to address the newly emerged global security threats to the United States and its allies.⁸² Of particular interest was an apparent overseas “arc of instability” that stretches from the Western Hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East to Asia.⁸³ Inside this arc of instability were territories that provide sanctuary to enemies of the United States and its allies - territories that enable the terrorists a place of relative safety from which to prepare plans, train forces and launch attacks.

Maintaining regional stability in Asia is a formidable task, due to several different but interrelated points. First, the possibility exists that a military competitor with a large resource base could emerge in the region. Second, the sheer size of the region presents an exceptionally challenging area for the United States to protect or patrol. Third, that the density of U.S. basing and en-route infrastructure in Asia is lower than in other regions around the globe. Related to this last point is that the United States has limited assurances of access to facilities in the region- which makes it particularly important to both seek out new and reinforce existing access and infrastructure agreements.

In 2003, the United States proposed a shift of forces in Northeast Asia, with three main elements to the reorganization: first, the U.S. Second Division in South Korea will be relocated from the Demilitarized Zone to an area south of Seoul, where they will now become more readily available for immediate redeployment in case of a crisis.⁸⁴ Second, air and naval forces in Guam will be increased: proposed changes include the relocation of a carrier battle group from California as well as 8,000 Marines from the Third Marine Expeditionary

⁸¹ National Military Strategy, pp.10-12.

⁸² Donald Rumsfeld. Quadrennial Defense Review. Sep 2001.
<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr2001.pdf> . Accessed on April 2006. p. VI.

⁸³ United States National Military Strategy (NMS). 2004.
<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf>. Accessed on 4 Apr 2006. p.13.

⁸⁴ Niksch, Larry. “Korea: U.S.-Korean Relations-Issues for Congress,” *Congressional Research Service* (Jun 16, 2005): p.14.

Force who are currently stationed on Okinawa.⁸⁵ Third, new training areas and facilities are currently being sought in Thailand, the Philippines and Australia for sustainment of U.S. forces.⁸⁶ There is, however, no intent for U.S. forces to be permanently based in any of these countries.

The impact to the Philippines of this impending realignment comes mainly for the need for new training areas for those U.S. forces moved to Guam from Okinawa. Guam, just like Okinawa, suffers from a lack of large training areas and those that it does possess are restricted. These restrictions provide little opportunity for the training that is essential to maintaining combat readiness.⁸⁷ This scarcity in turn requires that U.S. combat units, whether stationed on Okinawa or Guam, must routinely deploy elsewhere in the Far East for such training. Of those countries where the United States is seeking new training areas, the Philippines is the closest geographically. This makes training in the Philippines advantageous as some units being relocated from Okinawa are capable of self-deploying to the Philippines. For those that cannot, the High Speed Vessel (HSV) recently leased by the Marines is available.⁸⁸

Overall, the proposed U.S. Northeast Asian realignment bodes well for the Philippines as it remains poised to accept more robust bilateral exercises- as the Philippine forces would benefit from any additional counter-terrorist training received from the United States.⁸⁹ This training was urgently needed as the AFP was still struggling with a growing Muslim insurgent problem in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.

⁸⁵ Japan Times. "U.S. General calls Guam better base for dealing with Islamic Radicals," *Japan Times*, (Nov 9, 2005): p.1.

⁸⁶ Admiral William J Fallon. "Statement of Commander U.S. Pacific Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture," (7 Mar 2006): pp. 14-26.

⁸⁷ Institute for Defence Analysis. "Transforming U.S. Overseas Military Presence: Evidence and Options for DOD," Vol. 1. (July 2002): p.146.

⁸⁸ The HSV was originally acquired primarily as a cost effective alternative to continuing to pay high rates for transporting Marines and some of their equipment by U.S. military airlift to peacetime training ranges several hundred miles away.

⁸⁹ Niksch. "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation," *Congressional Research Service*, (Jan 20, 2006): p.11.

B. THE ABU SAYYAF THREAT

To date, the Philippine government has been struggling with insurgent groups of differing ideologies for over 4 decades. In particular, the Muslim insurgency in the Southern Philippines had been extremely costly in terms of both men and equipment.⁹⁰ Despite early Philippine attempts at resolution, the Muslim separatist movement had grown in strength over time, with different factions splitting off along the way (for an expanded discussion on the Moro Nationalist Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) please refer to Appendix I). Of those groups who split off from the mainstream, perhaps the most violent Muslim separatist group operating in the region is the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), or “Bearer of the Sword”. The group split from the much larger MNLF in the early 1990s with the intent of establishing an Islamic state based on Sharia law on the islands of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.⁹¹

The ASG rejected the non-violent practices adopted by the MNLF as the ASG prefers violent struggle, or “Jihad”, as its ideological strategy. The ASG successfully competed with the MNLF for the leadership of the Moros’ national struggle, successfully taking advantage of a pre-existing Islamic trend within the MNLF. During the 1970’s and 1980’s the Moros nationalist main-stream political force did nothing to inhibit the Islamists’ increased participation in the armed struggle against the Philippine government as they acknowledged the radicals’ contributions to the overall effort to drive the government to make political and territorial concessions. In 1996 the ASG split away from the MNLF as they were bitterly opposed to the apparent concessions that were being introduced in the peace process between the Philippines and the MNLF.⁹²

Abubakar Janjalani, the son of a fisherman on Basilan Island, originally formed the Abu Sayyaf Group in the early 1990s. While fighting against the

⁹⁰ De Castro. “Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era,” p.121.

⁹¹ Simon Elegant. “The Return of Abu Sayyaf,” *Time Magazine*, (Aug 2004). <http://www.time.com/time/asia/magazine/article/0,13673,501040830-686107,00.html>. Accessed 21 April 2006.

⁹² Ibid., p.1.

former Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s, Janjalani had become connected with a Muslim fundamentalist movement called the Al Islamic Tabligh. Janjalani continued his studies in Saudi Arabia and Libya where he became radicalized. When he returned to Basilan, he recruited two groups into the ASG: dissidents from the MNLF and as well as other Filipinos who had fought with the Afghan mujaheddin. Janjalani led the ASG until December 1998, when he was killed by police in Lamitan village on Basilan. After his death, his brother, Khaddafi Janjalani, emerged as the ASG's new leader and appears to have consolidated power.⁹³ Despite this change in leadership the ASG claim to an Islamic ideology with a focus on Jihad still guides their radical objectives and strategy.⁹⁴ Although the ASG presents itself as a legitimate secessionist organization, the facts tell a different tale.

Slowly refining their use of violence as a policy tool, the ASG have transformed into a credible terrorist organization. In the early 1990s the ASG is reported to have received funding from Al Qaeda through Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, who was Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law. Additionally, Ramzi Yousef, a known Al Qaeda operative, visited Basilan Island in 1995, where he reportedly trained 20 ASG members. Following this visit, Yousef established an Al Qaeda cell in Manila where he planned several attacks including: an assassination of Pope John Paul II, the planting of bombs aboard 12 U.S. airliners flying trans-Pacific routes, as well as a plan to crash an airplane into the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The plots were uncovered by the Philippine National Police in 1995. Yousef was later arrested in Pakistan and extradited to the United States for trial over his complicity in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.⁹⁵

Ultimately, it was the ASG's choice of sensational terrorist actions, like bombings and kidnappings of foreigners, that placed the ASG on the

⁹³ United States Department of State. Country Reports on Terrorism, (2004): p.93.

⁹⁴ Christos Iacovou. "From MNLF to Abu Sayyaf: The Radicalization of Islam in the Philippines," Institute of Defense Analysis, (July 2000): p. 7.

⁹⁵ Niksch, "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine..." p.5.

international agenda, as well as adding their name to the U.S. government's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations in October, 1997.⁹⁶ In April 1995 the ASG undertook its first large-scale action against the town of Ipil in Mindanao, which resulted in 53 deaths. By the year 2000 the ASG began to use terror primarily for financial profit, engaging in kidnappings for ransom, bombings, beheadings, assassinations, and extortion. In April of 2000, an ASG faction kidnapped 21 persons, including 10 Western tourists, from a resort in Malaysia where they gained nearly \$20 million USD in ransom from the governments of Malaysia, Libya, Germany and France.⁹⁷ It was these events as well as the group's ties to Al Qaeda that would draw increased scrutiny from the United States.

C. OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-PHILIPPINES

Following the 9/11 terror attacks, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo quickly offered up the use of the former U.S. bases, Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air base to the United States, stating that the Philippines was "ready to pay a price" to support the GWOT. Concurrently, she issued a 14-stage counterterrorism campaign to enhance intelligence sharing with the U.S. and other coalition members⁹⁸. President Bush, in response to the offer of unequivocal Philippine support, offered the possibility of U.S. military involvement in the AFP campaign against the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines⁹⁹. Prior to 9/11, Philippine government policy had been to apply military pressure to the Abu Sayyaf Group who, on May 27, 2001, had kidnapped three U.S. citizens and 17 Filipinos from a tourist resort in Palawan, Philippines. Several of the hostages, including one U.S. citizen, were murdered. However, AFP attempts to rescue the hostages had been ineffective due to several factors: difficult terrain, inadequate Philippine equipment, avoiding clashes with the MNLF and the MILF, as well as relatively high instances of corruption in the AFP.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Audrey Cronin. "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," CRS Report for Congress, (October 2004): p.4.

⁹⁷ United States Department of State. Country Reports on Terrorism, p.94.

⁹⁸ Banlaoi. p.303.

⁹⁹ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations." p.980.

¹⁰⁰ Niksch. "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine..." p.1.

In Nov 2001, the two nations signed an interim arrangement that gave the United States access to storing military weapons and supplies in the Philippines, the right to permanent over-flight, and approval to build temporary camps for U.S. troops in support of the GWOT.¹⁰¹ These moves were seen by the United States as key to upgrading American military links in Southeast Asia in order to prevent the region from becoming a new safe haven for international terrorists, thereby denying Al Qaeda a new home base and access to human and material resources. The United States and the Philippines also approved a cohesive training plan for the AFP, delivery of new equipment to enhance AFP mobility, as well as the creation of a new bilateral consultative mechanism. After 9/11, the Philippines received a ten-fold increase in U.S. military assistance, from \$1.9 million USD in 2001, to \$19 million in 2002. The large list of new equipment provided by the Foreign Military Funding program included a C-130B Hercules transport aircraft, eight UH-1H Iroquois helicopters, 30,000 M-16s, grenade launchers, mortars, sniper rifles, night vision and thermal imaging devices, as well as a 360-ton Cyclone class coastal patrol craft.¹⁰² New U.S. security assistance also included the training of anti-terrorism Light Reaction Companies of the AFP, as well as other programs designed to enhance overall AFP capabilities.¹⁰³

The United States and the Philippines also authorized the participation of over 4000 U.S. troops on Luzon in the annual bilateral exercise Balikatan (translated “Shoulder to Shoulder”). Under the framework of Balikatan an additional deployment of almost 1,300 troops, including 160 U.S. Special Forces personnel (SOF), were deployed to the Southern Philippine island of Basilan to aid the AFP in its operations against the Abu Sayyaf. The U.S. Special Forces personnel were given the mission of advising, training and assisting the AFP on counterterrorism operations, with the other troops in a support role: building infrastructure to support the operation, including road projects, digging wells, and

¹⁰¹ De Castro. “The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations,” p.980.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.981.

¹⁰³ PBS interview with ADM Blair. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism/july-dec01/blair_12-19.html. Accessed 12 April 2006.

providing economic and humanitarian assistance to the local population. This deployment was to be known as Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P).¹⁰⁴

In keeping with the 2001 QDR, the U.S. goal of OEF-P was to promote the development of professional armed forces in the area, while holding firm to the notion that the U.S. would only maintain temporary bases instead of a permanent forward deployed force¹⁰⁵. Unlike previous Cold War strategy, where the United States maintained a forward deployed force to ensure security of major Asian air and sea lanes, this deployment was to encourage and assist governments in neutralizing terrorist organizations that threatened their own countries and global security. A secondary goal was to better prepare the AFP for providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as aiding in future United Nations Peacekeeping missions. During OEF-P, U.S. troops deployed to the Southern Philippines were relegated to a purely supporting role: they were allowed to patrol with the AFP but they could not engage in combat, as they were instructed to merely observe and assess the performance of their Filipino counterparts.¹⁰⁶ To complement the U.S. ground force presence, the United States also made some of its national signals intelligence (SIGINT) assets available to the operation.

One of the best examples of U.S. intelligence and operational support to the AFP came in late June, 2002, when a Philippine Marine patrol boat, equipped with night-vision goggles and guided by U.S. intelligence assets, was able to ambush one of the senior ASG leaders. Abu Sabaya, spokesman for the ASG, had been under surveillance for weeks prior to the operation as U.S. Special Forces had surreptitiously installed a transponder in the foam padding of his backpack. The United States also provided airborne terminal guidance during the ambush by pointing a laser at the rebel boat, thereby allowing the Philippine

¹⁰⁴ Niksch. "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine..." p.9.

¹⁰⁵ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.974.

¹⁰⁶ David S. Maxwell. "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines: What Would Sun Tzu Say?" *Military Review*, Vol.84, Iss. 3, (May/Jun 2004): p.21.

Marines to track it with their night-vision goggles. After the Philippine Marines intercepted the boat in the open ocean, a brief firefight erupted which resulted in the death of Sabaya and the capture of several other ASG members.¹⁰⁷

U.S. intelligence assets did suffer limitations in their employment during the unconventional aspects of the operation. In fact, the rules of engagement led directly to an over-reliance on U.S. technical reconnaissance assets. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and a P3 Orion were provided by the United States to locate the ASG and the hostages on Basilan. The rationale for technical reconnaissance assets was force protection as their employment would minimize risks to U.S. personnel who were precluded from patrolling with their AFP counterparts. According to the SOF commander, the use of these platforms did reduce patrolling in remote areas, but the UAV surveillance was extremely conventional as it only serviced specific named areas of interest (NAI). The NAIs supported the higher headquarters' (the joint task force level) priority intelligence requirements, but due to long lag times in the dissemination of this information the AFP and SOF forces on the ground were unable to exploit the available reconnaissance assets.¹⁰⁸ Gracia Burnham, the surviving American hostage, described the ineffectiveness of the airborne intelligence assets in her memoir: "[We] heard a spy plane circling overhead, [but our captors] ignored them because they had been circling for months and nothing ever happened."¹⁰⁹

Ultimately, mostly due to AFP over-reliance on conventional search and destroy missions in the jungles of Basilan, the operation was a mixed success. During a AFP hostage recovery operation on June 7, 2002, U.S. hostage Gracia Burnham was rescued, but her husband Martin Burnham and Filipina Deborah Yap were killed¹¹⁰. The ASG, although it suffered large losses of manpower and

¹⁰⁷ Bonner and Schmitt. "Philippine Officials Detail the Trap, Set With U.S. Help, that snared a Rebel Leader," *New York Times*, (September 22, 2002).

¹⁰⁸ Maxwell. p.20.

¹⁰⁹ Gracia Burnham. *In the Presence of My Enemies*. (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003): p.237.

¹¹⁰ SarDesai. p.225.

material, was not eliminated as it shifted its base of operations to Mindanao¹¹¹. However, the operation was successful in that United States was able to increase the AFP's overall combat capabilities.

Arguably, the biggest gains of OEF-P appear to be political rather than military. OEF-P successfully strengthened domestic political support for a revitalized U.S.-Philippine alliance as it enhanced the Philippine government's programs of social reform and poverty alleviation in some of the poorest parts of the nation. The infrastructure left behind, in the form of new roads, bridges, and water projects, would provide lasting proof that the Philippine government was indeed committed to improving the lives of its citizens. Prior to 2002, the ASG had successfully put a strangle-hold on the island until the U.S.-Philippine bilateral response was able to break it. Non-governmental organizations had left stockpiles of medicine, building materials and bridges on the island that could not be delivered to the population due to fear. The combined military and humanitarian assistance to the island successfully freed the inhabitants of the ASG's reign of terror, forcing the group to go elsewhere. On a grander scale the operation led to further U.S. commitments to the Philippines in the form of \$4.6 billion worth of continued economic and military assistance. The Philippines used these funds to continue the implementation of its modernization programs for the AFP, thereby making the AFP more capable of handling the country's internal security problems.¹¹²

D. MUTUAL LOGISTICS SUPPORT AGREEMENT

Following closely behind the successes of the bilateral operations against the ASG, the United States and the Philippines signed the Military Logistics Support Arrangement (MLSA) on November 22, 2002.¹¹³ The five year MLSA year arrangement is important for three reasons: first, it provides the administrative structure required for logistical support between the AFP and the U.S. military in both peacetime and conflict. The MLSA also sets the legal and

¹¹¹ De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.985.

¹¹² Niksch. "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine..." p.11.

¹¹³ Mutual Logistics Support Agreement. <http://www.shaps.hawaii.edu/security/us/mlsa.html>. Accessed 05 Apr 2006.

logistic framework between the two nations for reciprocal logistic supplies and services during combined, peacekeeping or other multilateral operations. Second, the MLSA lowers the cost of the security cooperation by minimizing the administrative burdens of preparing interoperability and operational strategies for future emergencies. Last, and perhaps most important, this agreement shows that both nations are committed to the implementation of a formal access arrangement for U.S. forces- something that many leftist organizations and nationalist individuals had been opposed to since the 1991 base closures.¹¹⁴

As discussed previously, despite the attrition of many of their forces by AFP operations, the threat from the Abu Sayyaf Group did not completely dissipate. In fact, over the next few years their tactics have shifted to bombings, which may annotate a return to a more radical, politicized agenda. After the 2002 Balikatan operation, the ASG had a role in a roadside bombing outside a Philippine military base in Zamboanga in October of 2002 that killed a U.S. Special Forces serviceman. Khaddafi Janjalani also established links with Jeemah Islamiah (JI), an Al Qaeda-affiliated group in Southeast Asia that had begun to use Mindanao for training and organizing terrorist strikes. In March and April 2003, Abu Sayyaf, JI, and MILF cadre carried out bombings in Davao on Mindanao, which killed 38.¹¹⁵ Janjalani also established links with Rajah Solaiman, a radical Muslim group made up of Filipinos from the northern Philippines who had converted to Islam. Together, these groups carried out major bombings after 2003, including bombings in metropolitan Manila as well as the Super-Ferry 14 bombing in Manila Bay, which killed approximately 194. In March 2004, Philippine authorities arrested an ASG cell whose bombing targets included the U.S. Embassy in Manila¹¹⁶. Because of the ASG shift in tactics, future exercises between the United States and the Philippines would remain focused on strengthening the counter-terrorism capabilities of the AFP. AFP

¹¹⁴ Mutual Logistics Support Agreement. Multiple references.
<http://www.shaps.hawaii.edu/security/us/mlsa.html>. Accessed 05 Apr 2006.

¹¹⁵ United States Embassy to the Philippines website.
<http://usembassy.state.gov/manila/wwhrep4.html>. Accessed 6 Apr 2006.

¹¹⁶ United States Department of State. 2004 Country Reports on Terrorism.
<http://library.nps.navy.mil/home/tgp/tgp2.htm>. Accessed 6 Apr 2006. p.94.

operations were indeed achieving results, as the Abu Sayyaf's armed strength is estimated to have fallen from 1,000 in 2002 to 200-400 in 2005.¹¹⁷

Now armed with the MLSA agreement, and with popular support firmly behind the interaction of the United States and the Philippine bilateral exercises, Balikatan and other annual exercises were allowed to continue- with counter-terrorism training remaining the objective of each successive exercise (for a more thorough list of U.S.-Philippine exercises refer to Appendix II).¹¹⁸ During President Arroyo's state visit to Washington in 2003, President Bush designated the Philippines a Major Non-NATO ally and also promised increased U.S. military assistance.¹¹⁹ In 2003, the United States and the Philippines attempted to launch a similar operation against the remaining Abu Sayyaf members in the Sulu Archipelago. However, due to difficulties resolving the rules of engagement for U.S. forces as well as the question whether or not the Philippine Constitution allowed foreign troops to be exposed to combat, this operation was postponed.¹²⁰

In 2005, the United States once again committed forces to the region with the task of direct support missions for the Philippine military in western Mindanao against Abu Sayyaf, as well as non-combat missions on the Abu Sayyaf sanctuary of Jolo Island. U.S. officials had expressed growing concern over the presence of JI on Mindanao as well as the presence of alleged links between JI and the MILF. The Bush Administration hoped that supporting the ongoing peace talks between the Philippine government and the MILF it could break the MILF-JI ties. However, coordination among Abu Sayyaf, JI, and elements of the MILF presented the possibility of a wider terrorist war in the Philippines. For this

¹¹⁷ Niksch. "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine..." pp.10-11.

¹¹⁸ Global Security website. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/carat.htm>. Accessed April 2006.

¹¹⁹ C. Atharin Dalpino. "Separatism and Terrorism in the Philippines: Distinctions and Options for U.S. Policy." Testimony before the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, House International Relations Committee. June 10, 2003.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp.12-13.

reason the United States opted not for combat operations but instead on continuing its support role of providing advice, training and assistance to the AFP.

From 2001 to 2005, over 30 annual joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises occurred throughout the Philippines. These exercises were all planned under the auspices of the Mutual Defense Board and Visiting Forces Agreement, and agreed upon by both governments. These exercises continued to provide valuable opportunities for training, humanitarian assistance projects, information-sharing and other activities that benefit the national security interests of both the Philippines and the United States. Exercise Balikatan 2006, to be held from 20 Feb - 5 Mar 06, would be the most robust operation held since 2002. The exercise was to be conducted in three phases: humanitarian and civic assistance on the island of Jolo in the Sulu archipelago, a combined task force staff exercise in Cebu and cross training and field training exercises in Luzon. Approximately 5,500 U.S. personnel and approximately 2,800 Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel participated in Exercise Balikatan 2006 throughout the Republic of the Philippines. However, due to the rules of engagement and constitutional problems that arose in 2003, plans were made to keep U.S. forces away from any areas where combat with the ASG was likely.

Just prior to the start of Balikatan 2006, a devastating mudslide destroyed the city of Guinsaugon, on the Southern Philippine island of Leyte. Fortunately, as Balikatan was about to commence, a large U.S. force presence was in the area who was ready to provide support to the Philippine government. Within hours, more than 2,500 U.S. forces were diverted to assist in the search and rescue operation on Leyte. The U.S. military role was to provide immediate, life-sustaining support, in order to mitigate any additional loss of life or human suffering in the areas affected by the landslide. The venue of Exercise Balikatan enabled the U.S. and Philippine governments to work closely together to coordinate an immediate humanitarian assistance/disaster relief response to this emergency.

During Balikatan 2006, under the Project Bayanihan – an initiative provided for in Mutual Defense Treaty, seven Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAPs), four Engineering Civic Action Projects (ENCAPs), a staff exercise, and military training were conducted jointly between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and U.S. Military simultaneously on the Islands of Cebu, Luzon and Sulu. Assisted by U.S. Military, the AFP was responsible for security throughout the exercise. Success of the exercise included free medical and dental care to over 11,000 Filipinos, veterinary care for animals, as well as the construction of four new school buildings. As is the case of previous Balikatan exercises, all infrastructures built to support the operations would remain after the withdrawal of the U.S. forces. In accordance with agreements made between the United States and the Philippine governments, Project Bayanihan and other humanitarian and civic action programs will continue in Mindanao.¹²¹

E. CONCLUSION

As this chapter has shown, both U.S. military and economic assistance to the Philippines increased dramatically post-9/11. By allowing U.S. forces access to training areas in the Philippines, military to military relations between the United States and the Philippines have increased tremendously, while simultaneously bolstering the counter-terrorism skills of the AFP. Each country had its own reasons for rekindling this alliance. The Philippines hoped that it would draw badly needed funds to complete the modernization of the AFP, while the United States found a willing ally in which to test out its new security cooperation strategies that were provided in the 2001 QDR. Chapter four will discuss some of the implications this rekindled security relationship would have from both inside the Philippines as well as outside the nation's boundaries, including reactions from ASEAN partners and China.

¹²¹ Tim Meyer. "Balikatan 2006 improves Filipino lives, RP-US ties," U.S. Pacific Command Public Affairs. (March 6, 2006).

IV. PERCEPTIONS OF THE INCREASED U.S. PRESENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

As Chapter II and III detailed, several events increased the frequency of United States military deployments to the Republic of the Philippines after an almost 5 year hiatus. The first event was the ratification of the Visiting Forces Agreement by the Philippines in 1998, and the second when Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pledged her country's support to the United States-led "Coalition of the Willing" in 2001. Other important U.S. policy documents such as the 2001 QDR and the 2004 NMS also contributed to the large increase in annual joint exercises and operations between U.S. and Philippine forces on Philippine soil.¹²² The resumption of regular U.S. deployments to the Philippines, coupled with the proposed realignment of U.S. Forces in Northeast Asia, has sparked various levels of criticism from not only within the Philippines but from China and ASEAN member states as well.

Some criticisms have come about due to the alleged misconduct of U.S. troops while in the country. At the forefront of this debate was the December, 2005 indictment of four U.S. Marines for allegedly raping a Philippine woman at the conclusion of a bilateral exercise. Still others criticize what role the Philippines is expected to play in the international agenda as they are now entangled in a reinvigorated alliance with the United States. Despite general agreement on the importance of U.S.-Philippine relations and the U.S.-led war on terrorism, bilateral frictions have occurred as the Philippines has become more assertive regarding its self-interest and sovereignty. In July 2004, President

¹²² The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) outlined the Pentagon's plans for the realignment and transformation of U.S. forces across the globe. Recognizing the changes in the international situation in a Post Cold War era, the change in force structure was deemed necessary in order to address emerging security threats to both the U.S. and its allies. In 2004 the National Security Strategy (NSS) established homeland security as the first priority of the Nation, with the U.S. armed forces being tasked to provide an active, layered defense, both at home and abroad. In the execution of the NSS, the first line of defense is abroad and includes mutually supporting activities with U.S. allies to counter threats close to their source. The NMS is also supported by the proposed realignment and transformation of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia, of which the objectives are threefold: creation of a global anti-terrorism environment; providing a forward posture and presence; lastly, promoting regional security.

Arroyo withdrew Philippine forces from Iraq in response to the demands of Islamic militants who had kidnapped a Filipino contract worker, despite some criticism in the United States that the Philippines was “caving-in to terrorists.”

Regionally, the increase in U.S. deployments to the Philippines and the proposed realignment of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia has also brought about negative perceptions of U.S. global strategy. In particular, the Chinese feel there is overwhelming evidence that the United States is focused on a strategy of containing China. In pursuit of this strategy, the United States is apparently seeking both the creation of new, and the shoring up of old, alliances in the region.¹²³ The United States is also perceived to be bolstering Taiwan’s defenses against China’s growing military, creating a disparity in capabilities. The recent increase in U.S. deployments to the Philippines has also added fuel to this debate as the Chinese feel that this is an obvious attempt at establishing bases from which to mount a defense of Taiwan. Additionally, the Japan-U.S. relationship is also troubling to the Chinese as they view this as an opportunity for Japan to continue its militaristic trend. Lastly, the tensions between the U.S. and China have also confronted the ten members of ASEAN with one of their biggest challenges since the end of the Cold War: the grouping could potentially face a damaging split if forced to choose between Beijing and Washington.¹²⁴

A. TESTING THE VFA: PHILIPPINE RAPE CASE

On December 27, 2005, a Filipino prosecutor issued indictments against four U.S. Marines for allegedly raping a Filipino woman while in the Philippines during a training exercise.¹²⁵ The case revives memories of past abuses by US forces stationed in Subic Bay who were shielded from local prosecution. It also

¹²³ Yong Deng. Chinese Perceptions of U.S. Power and Strategy. *Asian Affairs, an American Review*, Vol.28, Iss. 3 (Fall 2001): p.3.

¹²⁴ Oxford Research. ASEAN: US-China tensions affect South-east Asia. (Oxford: Jun 28, 2001).

¹²⁵ Lum, p.15.

comes amid a restructuring of U.S. forces in Japan, where tensions have often erupted, most notoriously over the 1995 rape of a minor by three U.S. servicemen.¹²⁶

The indicted Marines, who are all stationed in Okinawa, have denied the charge. The Marines currently are in the custody of the U.S. Embassy in Manila. Philippine officials stress that the 1998 U.S.-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), has provisions to cover such cases. The case could prove awkward for President Gloria Arroyo-Macapagal, who is also currently struggling against accusations of electoral fraud.¹²⁷ In fact, lawmakers within the Philippines have questioned Mrs. Arroyo's commitment to enforcing the treaty and warned of a backlash if the Marines receive kid-glove treatment. "This is an emotional issue involving our sovereignty and our citizens, and we must take jurisdiction right away," says Sen. Richard Gordon, former governor of Subic Bay, the former US naval base where the alleged rape occurred.¹²⁸

The VFA grants Philippine authorities primary jurisdiction over the Marines, however, the VFA also provides the provision for the United States to request that the Philippines waive primary jurisdiction. In this case, the Philippine government would have to issue a determination to U.S. authorities that the case is "of particular importance to the Philippines" in order to continue primary jurisdiction. The VFA also allows the Marines are allowed to remain in U.S. custody until the completion of all judicial proceedings. The Philippine government can, in turn, request that the indicted Marines be turned back over to Philippine custody, which they have done. To date, the U.S. State Department has not responded to this request. If the Marines remain under U.S. custody, the

¹²⁶ Lum, p.16.

¹²⁷ The scandal involves incumbent president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who allegedly rigged the 2004 national election in her favor. The official results of that election gave Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Noli de Castro the presidency and vice-presidency, respectively. Hundreds of national and local positions were also contested during this election. The scandal and crisis began in June 2005 when audio recordings were released. This escalated, when a minority of the lower house of Congress attempted to subject Arroyo in an impeachment trial. This was blocked by Arroyo's coalition allies in September 2005. No trial has taken place thus far.

¹²⁸ Christian Science Monitor website. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1110/p05s01-woap.html>. Accessed 14 April, 2006.

United States is obligated to make them available to Philippine authorities for any investigative or judicial proceedings. If the Marines are tried and convicted by Philippine courts, the U.S. and Philippine governments would then have to come to a joint agreement on the facilities of detention.¹²⁹

By itself, the alleged rape case means little, but in the context of steadily increasing U.S. deployments to the Philippines, it could have far reaching implications if the Philippine public perceives a travesty of justice has occurred.

B. OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM: PHILIPPINE HOSTAGE DEBACLE

By 2003, the GWOT would begin its venture into Iraq. The United States built up a “Coalition of the Willing” in order to shore up international support for the invasion of Iraq. Philippine support for the U.S.-led Coalition did not go as far as providing combat troops as the Philippines restricted its personnel to humanitarian and reconstruction missions. The first true test of commitment to the reinvigorated U.S.-Philippine alliance came in July, 2004, when a Filipino truck driver was abducted by a group known as the Iraqi Islamic Army. They demanded that the Philippines withdraw all of its military and police personnel from Iraq within 72 hours or they would behead the hostage¹³⁰. After several days of failed negotiations from both the international community and the Philippine government, the Philippines released a statement that partially agreed to the Iraqi Islamic Army’s demands. The Philippine government agreed to withdraw a part of its limited military presence (11 out of 51 soldiers) while leaving the rest of its humanitarian contingent in place until their scheduled return to the Philippines on August 20th. This brought about swift condemnation from the other members of the Coalition, including the United States, as the Philippines had “caved-in” to terrorist demands.

Ultimately, the Philippine government’s decision to withdraw its troops was meant to strengthen its domestic front, despite the weakening of its international standing. President’s Arroyo was facing numerous crises at home, including a trying to negotiate with the New Peoples Army after a series of attacks against

¹²⁹ Lum, p.15.

¹³⁰ Tyner, p.103.

the AFP, as well as trying to sustain the fragile ceasefire agreements with the MILF. Both groups had issued statements that the President Arroyo was ultimately responsible for the Filipino truck driver being put in that situation in the first place, and that failure to act would bring about swift repercussions aimed at removing her from power¹³¹. Arroyo had also just gone through an attempted coup attempt in July, 2003. Thus, in an attempt to bolster her standing domestically, she decided to negotiate with the terrorists. In a statement issued one week after the hostage was released she stated that the Philippines was in a special circumstance not shared by other nations: "Unlike the United States, Australia, Bulgaria and other countries, we have 1.5 million Filipinos who live and work in the Middle East and 4,000 working in Iraq." From her point of view, she felt she had a responsibility to consider the welfare of these workers, and she hoped that her allies would understand these special circumstances¹³².

Only time will tell how much of an impact President Arroyo's decision will have on the newly invigorated U.S.-Philippine security alliance. It may be just a bump in the road as the United States may feel that the second front on terror in the Philippines justifies continued support of the alliance.

C. CHINA'S NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF U.S. STRATEGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

China is under the impression that the United States, comfortable in its newfound role as the sole superpower, is seeking both hegemonic expansion and a containment of China.¹³³ Chinese analysts purport that the proposed realignment of forces in Northeast Asia is an overreaction to an imagined Chinese threat. As China is the most likely nation to become a peer competitor, China believes that the United States is going to do whatever it can to contain them so as to continue its own hegemonic aspirations. China contends that the United States is beginning to focus its center of gravity eastward and is attempting to build up alliances in Southeast Asia in an attempt to contain China.

¹³¹ Tyner, p.105.

¹³² Ibid., p.115.

¹³³ Sutter, p.41.

China points to the dramatic increase in U.S. deployments to the Philippines following the 1995-96 Spratly Islands disputes as proof of this strategy. They also feel the United States is attempting containment in several other ways: by increasing arms sales to Taiwan, developing national and theater ballistic defense, maintaining human rights pressures on China, and imposing politically destabilizing and commercially harmful market restrictions on China. China also believes that the United States is intentionally demonizing China so as to diminish its standing in the international arena.¹³⁴

Of particular interest to the Chinese is the Taiwan situation. The United States government has vocally opposed any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. The U.S.-Taiwan relationship is guided by the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979 and founded on the Three Joint Communiqués (1972, 1979, and 1982) and the One China Policy. The United States maintains that these policies have helped maintain peace and stability for the past quarter century. The United States has two obligations under the TRA: to assist Taiwan in maintaining its self-defense capability and retain the capacity to resist any use of force against Taiwan. The United States has also expressed concern about the widening gap between China's military capabilities and Taiwan's ability to defend itself against this threat. The United States feels that its relationship is intended solely to support the development of a modern and joint military institution that will promote stability, democracy, and prosperity for Taiwan.¹³⁵

Beijing is adamantly opposed to this relationship as it contends that the United States is interfering in China's internal affairs. By maintaining relations with Taiwan the United States has heightened the tension in the region and has made it more difficult to achieve a peaceful settlement. Furthermore, Beijing believes the strengthening of U.S. bases in Guam and Japan is undoubtedly aimed at firmly maintaining U.S. dominance of Northeast Asia and the Taiwan

¹³⁴ Yong Deng, p.4.

¹³⁵ ADM William J. Fallon, US PACOM Commander. Speech before Armed Services Committee, 8 March 2005.

Strait situation. The Chinese point out numerous events that have led them to this conclusion. First, that former U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Blair stated that the nuclear powered submarines in Guam could “promptly” help in Taiwan’s “self-defense” when conflict breaks out in the Taiwan Strait.¹³⁶ Second, as part of the U.S. force restructuring in the Pacific, the U.S. Marine Corps is considering moving some of its forces from Okinawa to the island of Shimoji, (also known as Xiadi) an island about 200 miles east of Taiwan. Additionally, the Japanese Self Defense Force is proposing to station four Air Force units, including F-15C squadrons, on the island. Third, the United States is bolstering Taiwan’s defenses against China’s growing naval and air forces with an \$18.2 billion arms package that includes four Kidd Destroyers, 12 P-3C Orion anti-submarine aircraft, eight diesel-electric submarines and six PAC-3 anti-missile batteries.¹³⁷ China also maintains that the United States has assigned a serving officer to the American Institute in Taiwan to strengthen U.S.-Taiwan interoperability in case of combat.¹³⁸

For its part, Taiwan is not helping diminish China’s fears as they welcome any potential U.S. and Japanese commitments to Taiwan’s security. Taiwan has always had strong economic, cultural and historical links with Japan and would like them to continue. During the opening ceremony of the 2004 Forum on Taiwan-Japan Relations on Oct. 10, Taiwanese Prime Minister Yu Shyi-kun mentioned that Japan should discard those restrictions of its pacifist constitution that restricted it from playing a more active role in Northeast Asian security and defense. Taiwan is strongly in favor of a stronger Japanese military as it hopes that Japan would come to its aid in the event of an attack from China. Japan would most likely do so as it would want to protect its access to the South China Sea and the waterways that carry the country’s critical oil and natural gas

¹³⁶ Cited from Li Daguang: “U.S. Military Readjustment of Overseas Deployment Does Not Help to Resolve the Taiwan Issue,” in *Guoji Xianqu Daobao*, (Aug. 2004).

¹³⁷ Stratfor.com. “Japan, U.S.: Strengthening an Alliance, Protecting Taiwan,” (October 13, 2004).

¹³⁸ Liu Qing, The Impact of U.S. Global Military Strategic Readjustment on Asia-Pacific Security, 2005.

imports. The prime minister concluded his speech with the expressed hope that an alliance could be developed between Taiwan, the U.S. and Japan.¹³⁹

In the case of the U.S.-Japan alliance, China feels that the United States is increasing Japan's status in its Asia-Pacific strategy, which has led Japan to increase its militarist tendencies. Japan has seized the opportunity of an increased U.S.-Japan alliance to boost its own military strength in pursuit of becoming a global military power. Since the conclusion of the Cold War, Japan's defense policies have slowly broken through the post-war peace constitution, discarding the "exclusively defensive" defense principle. The Chinese point out many events in recent years to support this view: Prime Minister Koizumi visiting the Yasukuni Shrine in 2005 and again in 2006; the 2005 Japanese Defense White Paper which they feel exaggerates the so-called "China Threat;" the U.S.-Japanese agreement to share Yokota Airbase; and that Japan's military is being greatly modernized by weapons provided by the United States. China also feels that the United States is encouraging Japan's militarist tendencies as it will intensify confrontation and competition between it and China. This would mean that the power of the two countries would cancel each other out, thereby keeping each other in check. The end result would place the United States in a more advantageous position in this three-way relationship- thereby obtaining the dual objectives of containing China while also controlling Japan.¹⁴⁰

D. ASEAN

In recent years, China has been actively pursuing cooperative diplomacy by institutionalizing Chinese participation in regional dialogues, specifically the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Although China initially used its influence to prevent ASEAN from being too active, China has grown more skilled at multilateral diplomacy as it realizes it can use its memberships in regional institutions to advance Chinese political and economic interests.¹⁴¹ The United States is using these same regional dialogues to rally support for the Global War

¹³⁹ Stratfor.com. Japan, U.S...

¹⁴⁰ Xu Feng. "U.S. Factor in Japan Becoming a Military Power," (2005).

¹⁴¹ Nathan et al, p.101.

on Terror. With an increased U.S. presence in Southeast Asia under the guise of combating terrorism, China feels the United States is inducing a destabilizing effect to the region. Some ASEAN states are catering to U.S. wishes due to self-interests such as increased economic investment and internal security issues. Still others fear that if they seek the same interaction they will be forced into a dependent relationship with the United States. The strategy of pre-emptive defense as outlined in both the 2001 and 2005 QDR has led some ASEAN members to fear that this would legitimize external intervention into the internal affairs of states deemed as harboring or supporting terrorist groups.¹⁴² It is for all of these reasons that China believes that the increased U.S. interaction in Southeast Asia is sowing the seeds of disharmony between ASEAN member states.

The fact that the United States has had a long history of security cooperation with Australia also leads China to this assumption. As a part of its Northeast Asian realignment, the United States is planning to build a large joint training center in Northern Australia as well as supplying the country with a missile defense system. By giving Australia the “southern anchor” role in the U.S. Asia-Pacific security plan, China believes that the United States has increased the level of anxiety in Southeast Asia. This will take the form of arms expansion by neighboring ASEAN member states, leading to an ultimate destabilization of Southeast Asia.¹⁴³

E. MITIGATING FEARS

Fears regarding U.S strategy in Southeast Asia can be mitigated by providing concrete examples on how the annual United States and Philippine bilateral exercises have provided a stabilizing effect to the region, specifically in the southern Philippines- most notably Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Due to this stability, both governmental and non-governmental organizations have been able to resume aid to this embattled region.

¹⁴² De Castro. “Addressing Terrorism in Southeast Asia,” p.120.

¹⁴³ Liu Qing, p.4.

A shining example of the peaceful foreign policy goals of the United States comes through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world. In the Philippines, USAID has instituted various projects that promote the ideal that economic opportunities will in turn strengthen peace in Mindanao. USAID does this by aiding the Philippines in fighting corruption, protecting the environment, improving health care and family planning services, and improving education in Mindanao.

Assisting the Philippine government in promoting peace, USAID has helped 28,000 former combatants switch from guerilla fighting to farming seaweed, hybrid corn, rice or higher value crops. USAID has also helped 115 banks and rural cooperatives provide loans and other services which enhance small business ownership.¹⁴⁴ USAID has also worked with the Philippine government to curb rampant corruption, by making it a high risk, low reward activity. The two governments have instituted programs that target the areas where corruption can be most damaging: taxes, customs administration, government procurement and the judiciary. The most notable example came in 2002 when USAID helped the Philippine government strengthen its 2001 Anti-Money Laundering Act.¹⁴⁵ USAID has also helped the Philippine government strengthen its economic systems and infrastructure by improving inter-island shipping and port facilities.¹⁴⁶

The United States has remained committed to improving the overall welfare of the Southern Philippines by promoting health and education reform. USAID works with local governments to bolster their ability to deliver better health care, particularly in conflict areas or those with few services. Once considered one of the best in all of Asia, the Philippine education system has deteriorated significantly in recent years. USAID seeks to increase access to

¹⁴⁴ United States Department of State, USAID website. http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/philippines/. Accessed 10 Apr 2006.

¹⁴⁵ Philippine Congress Website. <http://www.cld.org/laws.htm>. Accessed 10 Apr 2006.

¹⁴⁶ USAID website. p.1.

quality education and livelihood skills in areas most affected by conflict and poverty. The focus is on improving the teaching of math, science, English and other subjects in Mindanao's public schools.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, through investment in the Philippine public education system, USAID is attempting to provide an alternative explanation for the misinformation provided by radical Islamists in the region.

In April 2006, the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines, Kristie A. Kenney, visited Zamboanga City, where she unveiled U.S.-funded development projects and pledged more aid, particularly in former conflict areas. She signed documents for the construction of two bridges in the villages of Sinunuc and Taguiti.¹⁴⁸ During her trip she also stated that USAID would provide even more grants for Mindanao once a peace agreement is signed between the government and the MILF. Additionally, she released information on an upcoming deployment of the USNS Mercy, a U.S. hospital ship, to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The Mercy is being deployed to provide free medical aid to thousands of Filipinos on the islands of Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, Basilan, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur.¹⁴⁹

F. CONCLUSION

The United States views the Asian-Pacific region as mostly in a state of peace, and it intends to create further stability by maintaining its policy of vigorous engagement, forward U.S. force presence and strengthened alliances.¹⁵⁰ In keeping with this strategy, the United States has committed vast sums of economic and military assistance to the Republic of the Philippines. This assistance has been perceived negatively from both within the Philippines as well as from other nations in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States can

¹⁴⁷ USAID website. p.1.

¹⁴⁸ Manila Times website. <http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2006/apr/06/yehey/metro/20060406met1.html>. Accessed 10 Apr 2006.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.1.

¹⁵⁰ Speech by Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command during lecture "Asia Pacific Security: Challenges and Opportunities." 29 April 2006.

diminish these fears through continued acts of constructive international dialogue that are focused on the many successes of the reinvigorated U.S.-Philippine alliance.

V. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Since 1990, the Republic of the U.S.-Philippine Security relationship has gone through a series of ebbs and flows. When the Philippine Senate chose not to renew the base treaty, the United States government had no other option but to turn over Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base to the Philippines. This event not only marked the end of almost 100 years of a continuous U.S. military presence in the Philippines, but also marked that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was now solely responsible for the country's external and internal security. With this responsibility came the realization that the AFP was in dire need of modernization and was ill-equipped for this daunting task.

By the mid 1990s rising regional threats coupled with numerous Philippine internal security concerns forced both the Philippines and the United States to reevaluate their security relationship. The Philippines still had yet to modernize its military and was searching for ways to reintroduce U.S. security assistance to its shores. The U.S., recognizing that the People's Republic of China appeared to be in the beginning of a naval arms build-up in the South China Sea, felt the need to act in order to reassure other Asian nations of its security commitment to the region. President Arroyo's declaration of support to the U.S. anti-terrorism campaign in September, 2001 was the key that solving this dilemma as it unlocked the door through which U.S. military assistance and equipment could once again flow into the country.

When the United States offered up both economic and military assistance to the Philippines in its fight against the Abu Sayyaf Group both the Philippines and the United States came away with their agendas satisfied. The Philippines once again had access to large annual amounts of economic and military assistance, as well as warm relations with a very powerful ally. With the Philippines now designated a "front-line state" in the Global War on Terror, the United States significantly increased its foreign assistance to the country. This

assistance was offered up in recognition of the Philippine Government's acceptance of the Bush administration's wish to test its new strategy of security. These new U.S. strategies were based on encouraging partner nations to develop, modernize and transform their own military capabilities.

Armed with a re-kindled alliance, the United States military was once again allowed access to valuable Philippine training areas. Increased access to Philippine training areas was required due to insufficient ranges at the home bases of the forward deployed U.S. forces, most notably Okinawa. The increase in training opportunities in the Philippines would also facilitate improvements in both the United States and Philippine militaries while simultaneously providing a stabilizing effect to crisis ridden Mindanao.

In the Global War on Terror, the United States faces an irregular enemy that is committed to using terror as its primary strategy. Because of the numerous elusive threats to our nation posed by terrorism, the 2004 National Security Strategy (NSS) established homeland security as the first priority of the Nation. Within it, the U.S. armed forces was tasked to provide an active, layered defense, both at home and abroad. In the execution of the NSS, the first line of defense is abroad and includes mutually supporting activities with U.S. allies to counter threats close to their source.

The proposed realignment of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia will address some of these threats to our security while also accomplishing several key objectives of our National Military Strategy: the creation of a global anti-terrorism environment; providing a forward posture and presence; lastly, promoting regional security.¹⁵¹ As outlined in Chapter III, the most successful application of this strategy being the 2002 U.S.-Republic of the Philippines bilateral response to the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Southern Philippines.

The U.S. deployment was part of its second phase of the GWOT, directed at denying Al Qaeda new home bases and access to human and material resources. Specifically, the U.S. troops deployed to the Southern Philippines

¹⁵¹ United States National Military Strategy, pp.10-12.

were relegated to a purely supporting role: they were allowed to patrol with the AFP but they could not engage in any combat operations, as they were instructed to merely observe and assess the performance of their Filipino counterparts. Unlike previous Cold War strategy, where the U.S. maintained a forward deployed force to ensure security of major Asian air and sea lanes, this deployment was to encourage and assist governments in neutralizing terrorist organizations that threatened their own countries and global security. A secondary goal was to develop professional armed forces in the region that were capable of providing humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, as well as aiding in future United Nations Peacekeeping missions.

Ultimately, the operation was a mixed success. Two hostages, one American and one Filipino, were killed in a firefight between the Abu Sayyaf and the AFP during a rescue attempt. The ASG, although it suffered large losses of manpower and material, was not eliminated as it shifted its base of operations to Mindanao¹⁵². However, the operation was successful in that upgraded the AFP's combat capability. Politically, the operation strengthened domestic political support for a revitalized U.S.-Philippine alliance as it enhanced the Philippine government's programs of social reform and poverty alleviation in some of the poorest parts of the nation. By the end of 2003, the U.S. had committed \$4.6 billion worth of continued economic and military assistance to the RP.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Political conflict and violence between the Philippine government and the Muslim separatists in the Southern Philippines has been going on for over three decades. As mentioned previously, the causes are deep and interwoven: low degree of political autonomy of Muslims in the region; inability of the state to adequately meet the socio-economic needs of the minority Muslim community; and lastly, the underlying belief among Muslims that they are victims of systematic socio-economic and politico-economic exploitation by the state. The MNLF, the MILF, and the ASG have all sprung up against the Philippine

¹⁵² De Castro. "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," p.985.

government because of these beliefs. All of these groups share one thing in common- the desire to improve the lives of the Muslim minority.

As mentioned previously, all groups have engaged in political violence to one degree or another. But it is only the ASG that has opted for the use of predominately terror tactics, to the consternation of the other groups. The Philippine government has been able to enter in to peaceful negotiations with two of the major insurgent groups, the MNLF and the MILF. I argue that a lasting peace with these groups can only be achieved if the Philippine government undertakes a concerted effort to improve the lives of the Muslims in the South. This effort will also ultimately aid in the demise of the ASG, as it will no longer have a disgruntled population in which to recruit from. Taking the battle to the terrorists is not the sole solution to the problem of how best to deal with instability in the region. The United States must continue to aid its allies in achieving lasting peace in the region by taking the following actions:

First, the United States must continue to support the Philippine government in the implementation of programs and infrastructure which will improve the socio-economic conditions of Muslims in the Southern Philippines- starting with education reform. Radical Islamists have been able to capitalize on the existence of a constituency that has been neglected. With no adequate government sponsored educational system in place, the radicals have been able to promote ideas which are vehemently anti-Western, producing new radicalized intellectuals and willing young conscripts for insurgent groups to draw from. Western countries should come to the aid of the Philippines and provide unbiased textbooks and other materials that teach global history through peaceful competition and integration. Through investment in a public education system these materials could be disseminated, thereby providing an alternative explanation for the misinformation provided by the radical Islamists.

Second, states compete with insurgent groups and terrorists for the support and will of the people. Be deemed legitimate, states must be able to provide basic services as protection and welfare to their people. If not, terrorist

groups will be able to exert their will. The Philippine government must also continue to invest in infrastructure in the South. It is one of the poorest regions in the country, with approximately 65% of the population below the poverty line. This part of the country has the lowest access to safe drinking water, the least access to electricity, toilet and health facilities of any other region¹⁵³. To address this need, many of the goals of Operation Balikatan 2002 in Basilan were to provide infrastructure which would be left behind for the use of the locals. The ASG had successfully put a strangle hold on the island until the U.S.-Philippine bilateral response was able to break it. NGOs had left stockpiles of medicine, building materials and bridges on the island that were unable to be delivered to the population due to fear. The combined military and humanitarian assistance to the island successfully freed the inhabitants of the ASG's reign of terror, forcing the group to go elsewhere.

Third, the United States must continue to support the Philippine government in the continued investment in the modernization of its military and developing a more credible force. The AFP had been neglected for many years due to mistrust of its motives by the Philippine government. Focused on internal security since the birth of the nation, the AFP must develop an adequate counter-insurgency force, one that is capable of working in a joint environment. To date, the AFP has focused only on conventional warfare techniques, which usually do not discriminate between combatant and noncombatant. The AFP will only be able to achieve these goals through the continued support and tutelage of the United States.

Lastly, corruption has been, and continues to be, rampant in both the military and the local and state governments. In order to gain the continued trust and support of the people, instances of corruption must be addressed swiftly and firmly whenever they are identified. If not, the state will not be seen as illegitimate, thereby providing insurgent groups or terrorists fodder on which to feed.

¹⁵³ Buendia, p.14.

In a recent speech, ADM Fallon, Commander U.S. Pacific Command, outlined the concern over lawless areas in the Southern Philippines and neighboring Indonesia.¹⁵⁴ These areas are loosely governed and have historical problems which have facilitated both a breeding ground for terror operations as well as the creation of alliances with criminal organizations. The United States is dedicated to assisting regional security in Southeast Asia, but is not in the business of breaking a country's sovereignty. By providing economic and military assistance to its allies, the United States can enable them to handle these terrorist groups themselves. This assistance has been perceived negatively by some nations within Southeast Asia. The United States can diminish these fears through continued acts of constructive international dialogue that are focused on the many successes of the reinvigorated U.S. Philippine alliance.

The U.S. force realignment in Asia will ensure that our primary line of defense remains well forward. The defense of the United States as well as the protection of its allies depends on keeping U.S. forces forward deployed to key regions. This strategy has been successful in enhancing and tying together our network of strategic bilateral alliances in the region, as shown during OEF-P, by enabling our partners to take the battle to the terrorist forces. Unfortunately, because the ASG is dedicated to the use of terror tactics they can not be negotiated with. Therefore, its members must be hunted down and eradicated. This task must be completed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Through lasting, consistent training exercises between U.S. and Philippine militaries, the AFP will become a more capable of completing this task. It is through precisely this type of continued, positive interaction with our allies that the United States will not only receive mandatory force sustainment training, it will also gain access to information and intelligence that is critical to the anticipation and understanding of emerging threats in the region.

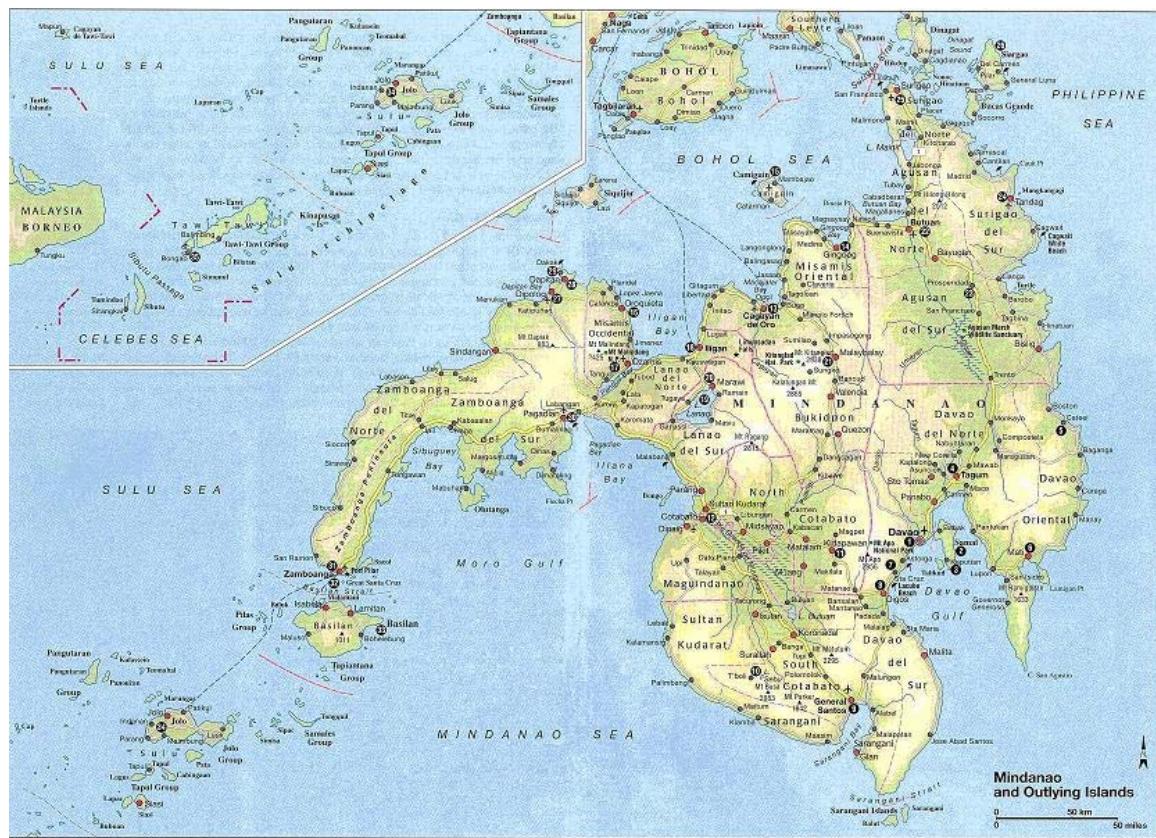
¹⁵⁴ Speech by Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command during lecture "Asia Pacific Security: Challenges and Opportunities." 29 April, 2006.

Figure 2. Map of the Republic of the Philippines¹⁵⁵



¹⁵⁵ CIA World Factbook. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rp.html>. Accessed 12 May 2006.

Figure 3. Map of the southern region of the Philippines, including Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago¹⁵⁶



¹⁵⁶ Honorary Philippine Consulate South Florida website. <http://www.pwsdb.com/FortLauderdalePCG/Maps-Phil.php>. Accessed 12 May 2006.

APPENDIX I MUSLIM SECESSIONIST GROUPS IN THE PHILIPPINES

A. THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) AND THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF)

Islam was introduced to Southeast Asia by maritime merchants during the 15th century. In the regions of what is now Indonesia and Malaysia an overwhelming majority of the population accepted the Islamic identity, while in the Philippines Muslims were to remain a minority. The Filipino Muslims, also called Moros, constitute 5% of the Philippines' population and are mainly concentrated in the southern portion of the archipelago. Organized under independent sultanates, the Moros successfully avoided Spanish conquest. Upon the conclusion of the Spanish American war they fell under United States sovereignty. A reluctant colonial power, from the outset the U.S. stated that its policy was to slowly groom the Philippines for eventual self-rule. On July 4, 1946, the United States stuck to their promise and formally declared the independence of the Philippines, effectively turning all of its inhabitants into citizens of the Republic of the Philippines.

Many Southern Muslims viewed this action as a betrayal of trust as the vast majority of Moros did not consider themselves Filipinos due to their religious and cultural differences, while making the additional claim that as they had never been conquered by the Spanish, they deserved to be an independent state¹⁵⁷. Despite these complaints, some members of the Muslim political elite aligned themselves with the policies of the new state, which included state sponsorship of large-scale Christian migration to the Muslim South. This migration marked the beginning of years of economic neglect and political discrimination, which in turn led to the creation of a Muslim nationalist separatist movement in the 1960's. In an attempt to unite the country the Philippine government sent several young men from non-elite Muslim families to Manila universities on scholarships with the goal of integrating the Muslim minority into the Philippine nation. In the

¹⁵⁷ Iacovou, p.1.

Muslim South, some of these newly educated young men would return to become popular separatist leaders as they provided an alternative to the established Muslim leaders who had failed to prevent the massive Christian migration.¹⁵⁸

Over the next several years the separatist movement slowly achieved success as many of those Muslim leaders who had collaborated with the state in 1960's now joined forces with the separatist leaders. Concurrently, in an effort to quell unrest the Philippine government was integrating rebel commanders into the state bureaucracy by offering positions which allowed them to govern large numbers of Muslims on the condition of defecting from separatist activities. Numerous violent clashes between the predominately Christian government and the Muslim minority continued until the early 1970s. The 1971 elections allowed many Christian politicians, armed with the help of President Marcos and the ruling party, to capture many provincial and municipal offices which had traditionally been held by Muslims.

In September 1972 martial law was declared and the government began to disarm the Muslim minority. This led directly to open rebellion as the Moros feared both armed Christian groups as well as military retaliation. Foremost in this struggle was the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), led by Nur Misuary. A previous faculty member at the University of Philippines, Misuary argued that only through a free and independent state could the Muslims free themselves from corrupt leaders and fully implement Islamic institutions. To him, the Moros constituted a separate and distinct people—the Bangsamoro people. With Misuary as the chairman, the stated goal of the MNLF is self-determination and independence, defined as a prerequisite for the unhindered implementation and enhancement of Islamic institutions among the Muslim minority in the Philippines¹⁵⁹. The peak of the rebellion came in 1975, when the military arm of the MNLF, the Bangsa Moro Army, was able to field some 30,000 armed fighters. The AFP responded by deploying 70 to 80 percent of its combat forces against

¹⁵⁸ Iacovou, p.2.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p.3.

them. Destruction and casualties, both military and civilian, were immense: an estimated 50,000 people were killed.

In response to the unrest, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and other Muslim international organizations successfully exerted pressure on the Philippine government to negotiate for a peaceful settlement to the conflict which resulted in the Tripoli Agreement of December 1976. The Philippine government officials and MNLF leaders agreed to a settlement which called for a cease-fire and granted autonomy to thirteen predominantly Muslim provinces. Unwilling to accept the negotiations with the RP government, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was formed in 1977 when Hashim Salamat, supported by ethnic Maguindanaos from Mindanao, split from the MNLF. The MILF, fielding around 9,000 troops, refused to accept the accord and initiated a brief offensive that ended in a truce later that month. Unfortunately, the truce did not last and conflict continued sporadically until the most recent cease-fire agreement was signed in 2000.¹⁶⁰

By mid 1977 the separatist struggle in the Southern Philippines had slowly transformed into a popular-based, relatively peaceful movement marked by isolated clashes with the RP government.¹⁶¹ With the collapse of the Marcos regime in 1985, MNLF leaders, with widespread support from ordinary Muslims, entered into main-stream popular politics with the goal of political autonomy for Philippine Muslims.¹⁶² In 1996, the MNLF signed an agreement relinquishing its goal of independence for Muslim regions and its troops were assimilated into the AFP as well as the Philippine National Police force.

The MILF, with an estimated armed strength of 10,000, has emerged as the larger of the two groups. Its main political objective has been separation and independence for the Muslim region of the southern Philippines. Evidence,

¹⁶⁰ Paul Rodell. "The Philippines and the Challenge of International Terrorism," in *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia : Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability*. Ed. by Paul J. Smith, ed., (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2005): p.129.

¹⁶¹ SarDesai, p.218.

¹⁶² Iacovou, p.4.

including the testimonies of captured Jemaah Islamiyah leaders, has pointed to strong links between the MILF and JI, including the continued training of JI terrorists in MILF camps. This training appears to be important to Jemaah Islamiyah's ability to replenish its ranks following arrests of nearly 500 cadre in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. MILF leaders deny links with JI and Abu Sayyaf, but there are many reports linking some local MILF commands with these terrorist organizations. Despite over two years of disavowing links with JI, the MILF has not captured any JI cadre. A stronger collaborative relationship has developed between these MILF commands and Abu Sayyaf since 2002. Zachary Abuza, U.S. expert on Islamic terrorism in Southeast Asia, has identified four of eight MILF base commands as sites of active MILF cooperation with Abu Sayyaf and JI. He also has identified the MILF's Special Operations Group as facilitating joint training and joint operations with Abu Sayyaf. JI uses these MILF base camps to train both MILF and Abu Sayyaf cadre. Khadaffy Janjalani and other Abu Sayyaf leaders reportedly have received sanctuary in at least one MILF base camp.

The MILF has had tenuous cease-fire agreements with the Philippine government. The government and the MILF concluded a new truce agreement in June 2003, which has resulted in a substantial reduction in violence and armed clashes. However, the cease-fire apparently has not reduced the movement of terrorist personnel and materials between Mindanao and the Indonesian island of Sulawesi under the direction of JI. (The Mindanao-Sulawesi corridor is one of the weakest links in the anti-terrorist efforts of Indonesia and the Philippines backed by the United States). Under the truce, a Malaysian observer team visited MILF camps in March 2004 and warned MILF leaders to end ties to Jemaah Islamiyah. The Malaysian team was a forerunner of a larger team of international observers that began to monitor the cease-fire in October 2004 — and presumably MILF-JI relations. A new round of Philippine government-MILF political talks has begun. In May 2003, the Bush Administration promised U.S. financial support of \$30 million to support a negotiated settlement between the MILF and the Philippine government.

The negotiations between the MILF and the government have concentrated on the extent of autonomy for Muslim areas and Muslim rights to “ancestral lands” taken over by non-Muslim Filipinos. Philippine government negotiators predicted a peace accord in early 2006; but the Philippine military’s Southern Command asserted in December 2005 that it had intelligence information that the MILF was violating the cease-fire by recruiting at least 4,000 new members. MILF leaders denied the charge. Government negotiators and advisers to President Arroyo also denied the Southern Command’s charge, which reflects divisions between military (AFP) and civilian authorities over strategy toward the MILF. The AFP favors a more aggressive strategy and is suspicious of a negotiated settlement. Nevertheless, given the active collaboration between several MILF base commands and JI and Abu Sayyaf, the Southern Command’s accusation of recruiting may be plausible, although Dr. Abuza, the U.S. expert cited above, doubts that the number would be near 4,000.¹⁶³ This collaboration also suggests that key MILF commanders would not support any agreement between the MILF leadership and the Philippine government that did not include outright independence for the Muslim areas of the southern Philippines. In that scenario, the MILF could split with hard-line elements joining even more closely with JI and Abu Sayyaf, which would maintain a high level of terrorist operations despite a settlement agreement. The Arroyo Administration and presumably the Bush Administration are operating on the assumption that the MILF leadership sincerely wants a compromise peace and opposes collaboration with JI and Abu Sayyaf. However, there is another view that the MILF leadership has a relationship with the hard-line MILF commands similar to that between the political organization, Sinn Fein, and the armed wing of the Irish Republican Army. According to this view, the MILF leadership is acting as a front for the hard-line commands, shielding them from moves against them by the Philippine government and the AFP.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Zachary Abuza. “Balik-Terrorism: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf,” <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB625.pdf>. Accessed April 2006. p.14.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.15.

B. RAJAH SOLAIMAN MOVEMENT (RSM)¹⁶⁵

The emergence of the RSM in 2005 presents a new terrorist threat to the Philippines. Unlike Muslims of the southern Philippines, the RSM appears to be composed primarily of Filipinos from the northern Philippines. The RSM has emerged from the estimated 200,000 Filipinos who have converted to Islam since the 1970s; many of these are Filipino who worked in the Middle East where they converted. The RSM's manpower strength is unknown, but Philippine intelligence reports indicate that it has cells throughout the main island of Luzon, including metropolitan Manila.¹⁶⁶²¹ Thus, the RSM potentially expands the reach of Islamic terrorism to Manila and other parts of the northern Philippines. A Manila bombing plot uncovered in March 2004 involved the RSM, according to Philippine intelligence officials. The RSM has cooperated with Abu Sayyaf in several bomb plots including the February 2004 Manila ferry bombing. The RSM also has received financial support and training from elements within the MILF. The RSM leader, Ahmed Islam Santos, underwent training in bombing in the MILF's Camp Bushra on Mindanao in December 2001.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Lum. p.9.

¹⁶⁶ Montlake, Simon. "Top Terrorism Suspect Falls," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (October 27, 2005): p.7.

¹⁶⁷ Abuza, pp.35-37.

APPENDIX II¹⁶⁸

A. BAKER PISTON

A JIATF West-coordinated ground operations law enforcement training in the Philippines. The objective of the Baker exercises (“Piston” designates Philippines) is to improve the effectiveness of Philippine counter-drug agencies by training those agencies in such topics as: Cordon and search techniques, special reconnaissance, medical training, advanced marksmanship, small unit tactics in urban terrain, instructor training, mission planning, training management, trail interdiction, and movement techniques.

B. BALANCE PISTON

Small unit tactics, unconventional warfare, special recon/direct action, internal defense operation, CMO, low level air/land tactics, airborne operations, live fire exercise, marksmanship, day/night air operations and information operations.

C. BALIKATAN

Annual JCS directed multi-lateral training exercise with the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty as the basis. This year's exercise will focus on Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). Training events include Command Post Exercise (CPX), Cross-Training Exercise (CTX), Live Fire Exercise (LFX), Humanitarian Civic Action (HCA), and Civil Military Operations (CMO). Main objective of “Balikatan” (Shouldering the Load Together) is to enhance interoperability of AFP and US forces at the operational and tactical level.

D. L-FCARAT

LANDING FORCE COOPERATION AFLOAT READINESS AND TRAINING. A USN 7th Fleet annual exercise with the Philippine Navy. Objective of the exercise is to develop interoperability between the two navies. Training events include amphibious landings, humanitarian civic action (HCA), diving and salvage operations.

¹⁶⁸ Received from Joint United States Military Assistance Group-Philippines, 14 April 2006.

E. COBRA GOLD

This is a US-Thai exercise similar to that of the Philippine Balikatan exercise but involves a division-size troop participation, and is also considered as multi-lateral exercise with the participation of other countries like Singapore, Mongolia and Philippines.

F. FLASH PISTON

A JCET Exercise between US Navy and Phil Navy Seals on small unit tactics and marksmanship. Training to include maritime close quarter combat and Jungle Environmental Survival Training (JEST).

G. FUSION PISTON

Lead: AFP/PDEA. Training will cover various aspects of maritime law enforcement in support of counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism operations (e.g., first aid, boat maintenance, communications, boat handling, evidence preservation, patrolling, insert/extract methods, reconnaissance, mission planning, and a field training exercise. Members from the DEA, US Navy SEALS and JIATIF-W will conduct training for members of the AFP, PNP, Philippine Coast Guard, and the Anti-Illegal Drugs SPECOPS Task Force.

H. HANNA

This is a USCINCPAC annual co-hosted game simulation to prepare key RP and US national government agencies, armed forces headquarters, and component force staffs to better coordinate interagency operations. Participants from the RP include: DND, DFA, NEDA, NICA DILG, AFP, and various RP agencies.

I. MARSEAEX

MARITIME SEA EXERCISE. This is a multi-lateral exercise between the USN, the Republic of the Philippines Navy (PN), and the Royal Thai Navy (RTN). Purpose is to train participants on maritime surveillance procedures and to enhance multi-national interoperability in the conduct of maritime surveillance.

J. MARSURVEX

MARITIME SURVEILLANCE EXERCISE. 7th Fleet sponsored USN-PN exercise involving US Navy P3 Orion with Philippine Navy surface assets on maritime surveillance and search and rescue operations.

K. MTWS

MARINE TACTICAL WARFARE SIMULATION. USMC initiative involving computer driven simulated CPX, which revolves around a Combined Amphibious Task Force (CATF). It is designed to train the commanders and staff of a Marine Regiment consisting of two or more Battalion Landing Teams (BLT).

L. PALAH

Pangdagat Lupat and Himpapawid. This is a bilateral COMSEVENTH FLT Naval Special Warfare exercise with elements of the AFP. CDR's Intent - To maintain and improve combat readiness and interoperability between US Forces and the AFP. PALAH provides US and RP SEALs an exceptional training environment, with an opportunity to improve interoperability between PN/USN in areas of maritime special operations, military operations in urban terrain, and close quarters combat operations. Training to be conducted, but not limited to: Live Fire, marksmanship, Jungle survival (JEST), OTB environment, Patrolling, Military operations in urban terrain, close quarters combat, and mission planning.

M. PHIBLEX/MEUEX

The MEUEX is an AFP-US Armed Forces Bi-lateral exercise to be conducted in the Republic of the Philippines (RP). The scope of the exercise includes the Combined Task Force Staff Exercise and Command Post Exercise (CTF STAFFEX/CPX) Event, Combined Forces Cross Training and Field Training Events, and Combined Civil-Military Operations (CMO) Event.

N. PIX

PHILIPPINE INTEROPERABILITY EXERCISE. US & RP Marines Interoperability training focused on infantry and reconnaissance operations. Marksmanship, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), Intelligence planning, and Airborne Operations.

O. RIMPAC

Seven Pacific Rim nations, along with the United Kingdom and France, are participating in Rim of the Pacific, a major maritime exercise conducted in the waters off Hawaii. RIMPAC brings together maritime forces from Australia, Canada, Chile, Peru, France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States.

P. SAGIP

This is a trilateral seminar/workshop type of exercise on disaster, search and rescue operations with the participation of the United States, Australia and Republic of the Philippines.

Q. SEACAT

SOUTHEAST ASIA COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM. Multilateral exercise which allows Southeast Asian nations to join together in a spirit of cooperation against worldwide terrorist threat. Exercises will give the Armed Forces the unique opportunity to exchange ideas and prepare the way for future coordinated exercises relevant to regional concerns. SEACAT supported opportunities for the USN and PN to conduct coordinated surveillance and tracking operations against maritime vessels of interest.

R. TALON VISION

A bilateral Ground-Air Integrated Training (GAIT) exercise with elements of the AFP. CMDR's Intent (III MEF) - To maintain and improve combat readiness and interoperability between U.S. Forces and the AFP. Talon vision provides Marines and sailors an exceptional training environment. Improve interoperability between PN/USN/PHILMAR/USMC in areas of amphibious warfare planning, naval surface warfare, helicopter operations aboard ship and amphibious operations.

S. TEAK PISTON

An Air Force-to-Air Force exercise focusing on low level flight navigation, infiltration and exfiltration operations, and air drops. It also includes the maintenance of C- 130 aircraft.

T. VECTOR BALANCE PISTON

CT JSOG JCET. SOCPAC sponsored JCET Exercise specializing in Close Quarter Battle and marksmanship skills. This exercise is conducted by the US Army's 1st Special Forces Group and the Philippine Army Special Operations Command.

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